

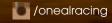


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ON THE COVER: CAN JEFFREY HERLINGS GO UNBEATEN ALL YEAR? © JUAN PABLO ACEVEDO

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've seen some crazy things in my life but I think the final round of the Monster Energy Arenacross Tour more or less topped the lot as les pilotes Francais tore strips out of one another allowing Adam Chatfield to take a well deserved win on the night while Thomas Ramette retained the Arenacross title.

There's been a lot said about that 14 lap main event on social media sites since - especially after the video of it went viral - and it seems that now everyone who's given it a view has a view. But to fully understand what went down I think you need to have followed the whole tour.

The nature of Arenacross racing means there's always going to be a certain amount of contact both intentional and inadvertent - and the riders fully understand this. And to a certain degree - well, up until the race direction feel the need to get involved - it's totally down to each individual rider's discretion how they decide to play the game.

The end result is you get racers who'll go out of their way to avoid all contact, others who don't mind getting aggressive if the situation calls for it, those who can perhaps be a little reactional at times and then flat-out dirty bastards who you'd basically never want behind you when you're going into a turn.

Hardcore Arenacross fans who've visited several rounds or more will easily be able to find a home for each rider on the entry list in one of the aforementioned groups. I feel that it takes several visits to get a true grasp of which rider belongs where as the hectic racing and tight confines can throw out the occasional curveball.

It's probably also worth mentioning that the relentless grind of the tour can massively effect a rider's mindset. If you've been rammed by the same guy at rounds one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and 10 - and done nothing about it - then your patience and ability to take it on the chin is probably wearing a little thin by round 11.

So I wasn't massively surprised to see several scores get settled in Wembley Arena at the Arenacross finals and not just at the front of the pack or in the Pro Class either. But what I was surprised by were the allegations being thrown around afterwards by people who I thought knew better. That was really disappointing.

However, I'm not gonna dwell on any negatives because at the end of the day it was a kick-ass series that I thoroughly enjoyed every step of the way. Each and every rider who lined up behind the gate should be proud to have been a part of it - as should the full team behind the scenes - because it was genuinely that good. If you made it to a round you'll know what I mean and if you didn't then you really missed out.

With that in mind I – like more than a few of the racers who still feel that they're owed retribution really can't wait until next year...

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BREAKING RIBS, MEETING THE POPE AND HOLIDAYING WITH TOMMY SEARLE — TONY LIVES ONE CRAZY LIFE

iao folks! Unbelievably we're here – right in between the first and the second GPs of the year! Yep, the season has already started and if you feel like the winter has gone too fast, you're right, believe me! I can't believe that we have begun competing in the 2016 season – it's crazy! Let's go back in time a little bit, to Sardinia, end of January, when I got injured in a bad crash during my usual training schedule. I've already told you how it went – I broke my ribs, so I was left wondering whether to race at least the last event of the Internazionali d'Italia MX series after having rested for a few weeks.

Unfortunately the decision was taken away from me, because when I restarted my usual training I felt really bad and I started to feel my arm fall asleep after only a few laps. We had to try and find the cause of this new problem and finally the doctor solved it – it's a nerve that became compressed in the crash and it's the reason why my arm feels so bad when I ride. Luckily I'm improving after every training session and my physio is helping me with specific treatments to increase the time I can ride without problems.

Before leaving to Doha I had the opportunity to meet Pope Francesco and it was highly emotional for Jill and I. I was fortunate enough to spend a few moments talking with him – a man with enormous charisma. It was fascinating for me and I'm grateful to the Italian Federation for the opportunity they gave me and the other 7,500 riders and people involved in the world of bikes who I was with.

A couple of days later we were boarding our first flight to Qatar but the feeling was not the same as it usually is when we start the season because I hadn't been able to ride any pre-season races. I went to Losail with no knowledge about my body, my resistance on the bike during a race and with poor physical condition because of the lack of training.

I decided to take the first GP of the year step by step, without pushing in practice and trying to do the best possible in the circumstances. After a good start in the qualification heat it went pretty well with a very satisfying fourth place. On Saturday I was left pretty stressed after the effort of the first two 30 minute motos since I got injured but I have to say that I'm really happy about the final result! A sixth place in moto one and a fourth in moto two, after having being in second for a while, felt like a victory! All the team was happy and now we are heading to Thailand with a different outlook – much more positive!

In Qatar we launched the Tony Cairoli Challenge! It's a mobile game, now available on the App Store for free. Now all the MX and videogame fans can compete in my boots by playing mobile on their iOS devices (iPhone, iPad Pro, iPad Air, iPad Mini) with exclusive 3D graphics and up to five different play modes, Championship, Quick Race, Time Attack, Challenge and Match Race.

With Tony Cairoli's race #222 players of any skill level can battle it out on five different tracks – Maggiora (free), Lommel, plus a Supercross arena, a Jump Line and a brand-new track specially designed for this game. I managed to follow the videogame development right from the very first steps and got to play on a preview and let me say this is lots of fun and is very realistic. I think that it's really cool for our sport to have a new videogame to play and I hope it will help to promote the image of motocross around the world – hopefully bringing some new

fans onboard.

Talking of getting onboard it's time to board my next flight with Jill, Tommy Searle and his girlfriend Sofie. We are on our way to Thailand to spend some days together before the race, so we will relax, enjoy our time and train hard in the gym and pool. Getting back to full fitness is now the top priority!

I hope that the new venue of Suphan Buri is nice, and better than last year. I'm sure that this will be the case because my friend Rui Gonçalves is now representing the riders and helping Youthstream in having the track prepared in the best way possible.

After the race we will all be back home for a little break, before the first European race that takes place in Valkenswaard. I hope that I'll be ready and fully recovered for that one, because I know that this is a race where you might like to come and see us in action.

Ci vediamo sulla sabbia olandese amici inglesi! (See you on the Dutch sand my English friends!)

A presto, TC222

Jour Ja





VALUABLE LESSONS ARE LEARNED IN SPAIN AS B-MAC AND THE BOYS GET INTO THEIR WINTER TRAINING GROOVE...

learned two valuable life lessons last month – how to tell if a person is genuinely really mad at you in a foreign language and how to adapt and overcome severe adversity in challenging circumstances. Foreign languages have always been a funny one to me. Most of us in the UK are too ignorant to learn another one – myself included – and expect the rest of the world to learn English because it's the bollocks, right?

Do you ever find when you hear people engrossed in a verbal exchange in another language that you don't know whether they are arguing or not because they talk so fast with what seems like a hint of aggressiveness? Maybe when we talk to one another we sound the same to someone who doesn't speak our language but it's easy for us to determine someone's attitude when they speak to us in English.

But in an unfamiliar language you could look a guy dead in the eye and not be sure if he's shouting at you or just passing comment – even if you've asked something as simple as for a sachet of ketchup.

We were in the Catalan region of Spain last month and I swear I got shouted at a lot in the week that I was there. I felt I got in deep mierda for asking what the soup of the day was, BC was public enemy #1 every time he requested no salad or sauces on his burger and one time when I filled the fuel cans up and then tried to fill the van from the same pump before paying I was sure I was one raised brow away from getting the cops called on me.

Actually, I can't be positive on that as she shouted at me across the forecourt from her shop counter fortress. Maybe she was a nice lady and was just shouting instructions. At this point I still wasn't sure whether I was being abused by people or assisted.

However, have a head-on collision with a Spanish man in his native land when you don't sprechen de lingo and it's real easy to decipher how you are being spoken to. And on the basis of that I can confirm that the soup lady, the burger bird and the fuel Nazi –among others – weren't in fact mad at us at all (lesson 1).

I won't leave you hanging so here's a quick brief of the small international prang I just touched on as it plays an important role in the second life lesson I learned that trip.

Straight up, it was actually a full-on, head-on

smash. In Spain the time to go riding is in the early morn. We were parked about 100 yards away from the hotel door on the inside of a left-hand turn. We were facing oncoming traffic so had to cross to get onto our side of the road. The turn had a high wall around the inside so seeing completely around the corner wasn't possible but we were on a quiet street and off the main road.

As we pulled out to cross over an Audi A4 came ripping around the corner at some rate of knots and completely melted our front end. It all happened in slow motion as we knew a second or two before impact about the s**tstorm that was about to drop. BC and I looked at each other wide-eyed after the airbag went off in his face and proceeded to wee ourselves laughing. Only this could happen to us.

Mr A4 wasn't laughing! He was irritated and maybe more so because BC and I were so amused at the state of our luck. I listened to him rant trying to pick out the few Spanish words I know but I never once heard pollo, se vende, la quanta, amo los hombres or agua sin gas so he was likely firing f***s into us.

After statements, paying a fine and watching Mr A4 blow steam out his ears and then go down with whiplash a couple of hours later, we were in a right old situation. We didn't speak the language, the van potentially could have been a write-off and we were a bizillion-mile drive from home. So we needed to work our way out of this situation (lesson 2).

We ripped the front end off the van outside of the hotel, made some phone calls back home and organised the major parts that we could see we needed with the intention of getting the small things we might need over there as and when we discovered them.

Luckily for us Justin Morris from JMMX training schools (who we were riding with) knew a guy who knew a guy and we had the van recovered to a local garage and the parts arrived with Justin a few days later. Throughout this whole exchange only one person could speak both languages. So it was tough and I became fluent in international sign language.

The van was patched back together in an attempt to make the 20-odd hour drive home. The air bag was hanging out so we cut it off, the seatbelt tensioners had gone off as a result of the impact so we made new ones from duct

tape and the radiator and intercooler were from an older model van so now we had an auxiliary water pump which used to be a part of the old rad which had nowhere to go!

The pump was to be our undoing for about three days before our commute home. It was just burning fresh air as we drove and it couldn't be unplugged or the van went into 'limp home' mode and wouldn't do more than 40mph and 10mph on hills – not a suitable driving velocity. So we problem solved...

The theory that the pump needed to detect water popped to mind so one day while stuck out on the road we came up with the idea of submerging it in water. We used one of my protein shake mixer bottles, filled it with water, taped it to the radiator coolant bottle to draw some heat to the water in case it had a thermostat and submerged the pump in the cup and let it pump water around the cup. I kid you not, it worked! For an hour.

Then we tried to trick the van ECU into thinking that the pump was still there by using something else that would draw power...a light bulb. We used grip wire in the power ports of the pump connector and attached it to a lightbulb and it very nearly worked! The bulb lit up but unfortunately it didn't solve our problem as it never drew enough power so the van still recognised the fault.

Finally, a Spanish mechanic who worked on a couple of Dakar Rally teams came up with the idea of a resistor in the port. Just like the grip wire, we stuck the resistor wires into the power ports and it was like a real Christmas miracle as the van came alive! The resistor was drawing just enough power from the connection to fool the ECU into thinking that the pump was still connected and even took the engine management light off completely, never failing us once for the whole interest home.

They never taught us any of that at high school – some of the best stuff if learned has been from the school of hard knocks. Ah well, all's well that ends well as they say – although I wouldn't have said that three weeks ago...

d trial tirree weeks ago...



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BRITAIN'S NEWEST FACTORY ENDURO RACER STEPS UP AND CLAIMS A MONTHLY COLUMN IN THE UK'S #1 OFF-ROAD READ...

t's often said that times flies when you're having fun and I couldn't agree more. The last 12 months have been pretty amazing for me. And they've flown by. I'm now getting stuck into my first season as a full-time enduro racer, and I love it.

For those of you who don't know too much about me I'll give a quick overview of how I got to where I'm at today. Basically, I joined the Italian Boano Beta team at the start of 2015 for my first real taste of Enduro World Championship competition. Thanks to their support I had one hell of a year. I finished third in the Enduro Junior World Championship, winning six days along the way, and finished as runner-up in the British Enduro Championship. I guess that all lead to me getting offered a spot on the official Beta Enduro Factory team for 2016.

As happy as I was to get a place on the Beta factory team, it was tough leaving the Boano set-up. They took me in at the start of last year and gave me an incredible opportunity. We had so many good times, and surprised a few people with the results we got. It was anything but an easy decision to leave.

But a call-up to the factory Beta team is an incredible opportunity - the kind you don't pass

up. In many ways it was exactly what I'd been working towards last year. I'm moving out of the junior class and into Enduro 3 for 2016 on a 300cc two-stroke.

Things are coming together well at the moment. I've only had one race to date, two by the time you'll be reading this. But with six or so weeks to go before the first EWC race in Morocco I'm pleased with where I'm at.

This time last year I was working and racing and trying to juggle things as best I could. Things are very different now, which takes some getting used to. It makes such a difference being able to focus solely on my racing, training and preparations. Remembering that my work is now my racing is still a weird feeling. But it's amazing at the same time.

At the end of last year I decided to have a real break. I went off to New Zealand with some friends and spent weeks on end cycling around what is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Without really worrying about it too much I built up my base fitness and with all my deals sorted got to switch off from racing and recharged my batteries. It was tough arriving home to the cold and wet.

I've decided that I'm going to do as much racing as I can in the UK with the support of Beta UK, alongside the EWC series. But I raced the first round of the Italian championship a few weeks back. As much as anything it was a chance to meet the team for the first time under race conditions and to meet my team-mates properly.

There are three of us in the team and I'm very much the junior rider. Alex Salvini and Johnny Aubert are the two other riders in the squad, both former world champions and both hugely experienced. I guess it's my job to show that I can be as fast as they are which I managed to do on the first day of the Italian race.

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little apprehensive meeting everyone for the first time, but during the weekend we had a great laugh and I got on well with both Jonny and Alex. So much so in fact that I'm going to go and live with Alex for five or six weeks during the lead up to the first EWC race...

Speak again soon.







OUR FACTORY SPECTATOR TALKS RUBBISH — NOWT NEW THERE THEN . . .

s the Hawkstone International the best motocross event to take place on British soil every year? Yes, it is! I'll get to my reasoning in just a second but first there's something that I have to address. Litter dropping.

Now I'm sure that everyone reading this places their rubbish in a bin no matter where they are - not just at motocross meetings but anywhere life takes them. The high street, the mountain bike trails, their place of work or the M6 - they keep hold of whatever it is until they find a bin.

It's pretty simple really, yet a minority of the people that attended the Hawkstone International couldn't figure out the simple act of placing their rubbish in a bin. If you have some rubbish your hand won't drop off from carrying it to a bin, I can assure you. It's just like taking a dump. You don't just drop it off while walking around do you?

Me and my much better half attended this year's international - her first time seeing world class racers, of which there were many - and in the queue down the lane getting in there were a handful of Costa cups littering the side of the road. If there's one way to help get a track or any event closed down it's definitely chucking litter out of your window on the way in and having the wind blow it up the drive of one of the local houses where the owners probably hate motocross.

Later in the day I saw a bloke - who was a brute and, to be fair, I'm not the litter police despite sounding like it so I didn't say anything walk back to his car just emptying out his pockets onto the ground in the car park! I couldn't really believe my eyes but what was I meant to do? I think I speak for every motocross organiser in the country when I say that this type of person isn't really welcome at motocross events.

Someone either has to volunteer to pick up the rubbish that's left or someone gets paid to do it. If they're paid then who pays for this? That's right, some of your money that you paid to get in will go towards paying someone to collect rubbish when it could easily be handled by everyone in attendance...

Anyway, now that I've got that off my chest I'll get back to my opening question. Just why is the Hawkstone International the best motocross event to take place on British soil?

For me there are so many reasons...

There's the location for starters. It's pretty central and from almost anywhere on the mainland you'll get the motorway there and then have 20 to 30 minutes of pretty good A roads before a little lane to the track.

The best thing about the place for me is that you can walk pretty much anywhere and get trackside with just a chestnut paling fence between you and the racers. Compare that to Matterley Basin. I'd rather be right next to the track and see exactly what the riders are doing than need binoculars to figure who's who. You can walk all the way around the outside of the track and I suggest that you do next time you pay a visit.

You can also walk anywhere in the pits and get right up next to the factory bikes and the riders. Obviously, Jeffrey Herlings pulled the biggest crowd to his team's pit area between his races and he only had a van door between him and the crowd as he tried to stay in the warm and not get swamped by the fans. I know he came out and signed autographs though - he's not a complete diva.

The crowd was huge this year and has been for the last three years. I guess as no high-profile racing has taken place for five months a lot of like-minded people were keen to see some decent racing in person. The rain prior to the meeting also meant that pretty much every practice track in the country was closed so most people headed for Hawkstone for their motocross fix that weekend.

You also get to see around half of a GP entry riding a track that most of us would struggle with, especially in the conditions this year. You can't not appreciate the level of skill they possess and you know they don't ever skip their motos in the week if it's been raining, that's for sure.

Then there's the track - it's so gnarly! If you've

never ridden there then you need to, just to say that you have as it's a track known worldwide. I've raced there four times - once when the conditions were just like it was for this year's International, once at the actual international two years ago in the support class when conditions were perfect and twice in the dry. It's certainly easier the drier it is! Sign up for the Acerbis Nationals or MX Nationals that both host a two-day meeting there this year and you won't regret it. I plan on taking the long-termer RM-Z to one of these races so I may just see you there...

The build-up for this meeting starts around November and then rider names are drip-fed to keep everyone interested. A steady flow of event information then gets rolled out with sponsor and rider promotions on the Facebook page with all you need to know - although it's all on the event website too.

In closing and in a perfect world I think the whole team involved with running the Hawkstone International should take over running the Maxxis British championship. My reasoning for this is floating around my mind as an unwritten story for another day but if you attended the international get along to the British round there on May 22 and compare the two.

With decent promotion comes the all-important financial backing (just look at the partners the arenacross series has on board) so our little bunch of islands could have Europe's premier domestic series, attracting riders from across the continent.

Instead we have just one brilliant event to get our fix from (as well as the GP) but how cool would it be to have, say, six race meetings around the country on the same scale as the Hawkstone International?

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CYTO





AFTER ONE MONTH OFF JAKE'S BACK — AND BACK ON TRACK N'ALL SO IT SEEMS...

irstly I'd like to apologise for not getting my column in on time last month, I'd only been back from NZ a couple of days so my timing was even more out than usual...
I've put it up on my Facebook page for those who are interested in what I got up to while I was away in NZ. Seems like a real long time ago now but I must admit the weather hasn't been too unkind since I got home and there hasn't really been a day where we've had to cancel riding because of the rain or snow which is good.

The good old west coast normally deals with all the crap stuff that comes over the pond and we normally just get the leftovers and a whole load of wind which I like this time of year as it 'dries the ole jorbbb out a bit' as we say around here.

Unfortunately – or fortunately as the case may have been – there was a brief hiatus of just over a week from when I got home that I didn't have a bike due to a bit of complication in Austria so I was getting a bit sweaty by the end of that week and was desperate to ride. But it did give me a chance to adapt to everything again the weather obviously being about 25 below what I've been used to but also food, sleep etc. So maybe it wasn't such a bad thing.

I did so much riding over there that I think my body needed a small rest to come back stronger from it and It gave me a chance to get in the gym, out on the road and running track a bit and get balanced out as all my training in NZ had been totally arranged around all the riding I was doing.

I was pumped to get back on the bike and back on my track. I must admit, I really fell in love with the Husky 450 over in New Zealand but I was slightly apprehensive about how it would fair on the snotty tracks, for no particular reason other than that I hadn't ridden on anything other than hardpack tracks and dry sand tracks.

But I'm pleased to say I loved it just as much and I've put in a good load of hours since being home around our local sand tracks. As I said before the weather has been good to us and at the weekend every one of our local tracks was open. I heard from people that were at each track that they were all rammed full of riders which is awesome to hear.

I've slowly been changing my suspension to adapt to the conditions and different tracks and I'm pleased with where we're at so far but am along way away from it being bang on, I've got a test booked next week in Holland with WP so that should secure a good sand setting leading into Lyng and Valkenswaard which will be my first GP.

It's been a little strange watching the first GPs on the TV but I've accepted it with no problem knowing that I'm on the right track leading up to Lyng and Valkenswaard which has been the plan since I started training in November.

I must admit I had a interesting couple of phone calls from a couple of teams the week before Qatar what with the sudden injury rush that occurred. But nothing has changed here and I will be riding the Hitachi Husqvarna in the British Championship and all the GPs barring the flyaway races (Qatar, Thailand, Argentina, Mexico, USA).

The cold while riding didn't really take long to get used to as I've been riding on my limit the whole time, meaning that I warm up straight away. The cleaning has taken a little bit of adjusting too though but at the same time my practice mechanic Barry has been back to business with the bike in the week which has helped a ton, limiting the risk of freezing to death after riding and probably helps limit the chance of getting sick.

Anyone that follows me on social media will know that I've been riding a fair bit at home recently. It's strange how now that I don't live there anymore I seem to like the track even more. I think it was probably because when I lived there I don't think I ever rode the track without walking the whole lap after geeking out at all the lines and talking to my dogs whereas now I guess without wanting to I get a bit of a break from it.

As well as the fact that Justin Barclay rebuilt

it during the off season so it's completely new. I have always chopped and changed the layout to keep it fresh and I'm pretty handy in a digger but when its your own track I find that sometimes its difficult to be creative with it – I became almost attached to certain parts of the layout whereas Justin came in with a blank mind and went to town on it. Everyone who has rode it so far has loved it, and importantly said how challenging it is, so that's good.

My team-mate Ben Watson came over for a couple of days before he headed out to Qatar. I think it did him good to ride some big jumps again. I rode at his local this week, FatCat Motoparc up in Doncaster. I've never got on very well with the race track up there having broke my ankle there once without crashing in 2011 and having a concussion there last year at the Maxxis. I'm not overly fond of the place but we had a good day nonetheless and I stayed on the bike.

It took me a little bit of time to find my way as the track is so damn fast but I nailed it in the end. Was good to get up there and ride with some of the lads that go there a lot. I'm very lucky around here with a lot of good tracks in my area but its good to get right out of the comfort zone and go to tracks like FatCat every now and again.

I must admit, on the way home I laughed and said this is why I never bloody leave Suffolk apart from when we race as it took me six hours to get home after they shut the A1 at Peterborough.

Cheers for reading...

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A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF ALL THAT'S ACE AND WHOLESOME IN THE OFF-ROAD UNIVERSE.

effrey Herlings hasn't lost any of his superhuman prowess from his past two luckless seasons. So far this season Herlings has entered three race weekends – the Hawkstone International, the Valence International and the Grand Prix of Qatar – and swept every single moto he has entered, including the two Superfinal races combining MX1 and MX2 riders.

If this early-season form is anything to go by the MX2 riders are in a lot of trouble as Herlings hones his rusty race craft as the season progresses.

Reigning MX2 world champion Tim Gajser excelled and exceeded all, including his own, expectations at the first round of the MXGP championship in Qatar. Gajser has never dominated a GP quite like he did at round one of the 2016 championship as he claimed the first double moto victory of his career in his debut in the class. It also marked Gajser as the youngest MXGP winner so far in history at only 19 years old.

Remember the name Courtney Duncan? The Kiwi wonder-chick that kicked ass at an international event in New Zealand last month? Well, the lady ripper did exactly as expected and dominated on her debut in the world championship for women in Qatar, too. After settling in on qualifying day when she wasn't quite on the pace of championship regulars Kiara Fontanesi and Livi Lancelot, when they were handing out the points she was at the front of the queue and asserted her dominance by winning both motos by just short of 30 seconds. She's the real deal and going to be very hard to get in front of.

Tony Cairoli struggled in his first race since some time last year. He was scheduled to do some warm-up events pre-season but a training crash put him out. That crash is still wreaking havoc with the most successful rider on the line as he had to overcome trapped nerves in his neck in Qatar.

It was announced he has signed a contract extension with KTM which runs until the end of

2018. At 30 years old this means TC will ride until he is 33 and with a current tally of eight world titles in his back pocket he would need to win each season until the end of his contract to beat Stefan Everts' record of 10 world crowns.

The Brits abroad had mixed fortunes. Simmo showed great speed at the pre-season internationals and turned out as highest-placed home-grown hero with sixth overall at the opener. He was chased down by Tommy Searle who finished close behind in seventh and who, at points of the race, was the fastest rider on circuit but recovering from bad starts left him at the wrong end of the top-10. These positive results give clues as to what we should expect at the Maxxis this year and Alex Snow, in his rookie season, scored points too.

Max Anstie had a nightmare with a DNF on the opening lap of race two after a fall broke the throttle housing on his Husky, ruling him out of a top-10 overall. Adam Sterry never quite made it through qualifying day as he cased a huge jump on the front wheel and broke his wrist



pretty badly without even crashing.

Ben Watson eventually made it to the first two fly-away GPs after looking like he would miss them due to his Hitachi Revo Husqvarna team's budget. But fear not, one of Ben's loyal personal sponsors - the Contract Furniture Group - stepped up and pitched in the big bucks to get the lad there and he started his campaign with 12th overall.

I'm sure everyone noticed that Motors TV must have been given the bullet from Sky TV! Motocross enthusiasts around the UK went into meltdown when they went to record the first GP to find Motors TV was missing. However, where there's a will there's a way and if you follow these instructions you can reclaim Motors TV although you'll be unable to record the channel.

Go into Sky options section on your Skybox and scroll across to add channels. Set frequency: 11.082. Set polarisation: 'H'. Set symbol rate: 22.000. Set FEC: 5/6. Set Standard: DVB-S. Set modulation scheme: QPSK. Now press the yellow button to search.

Once results have came up scroll down to Motors TV and press the yellow button again to store the channel and press select. It should then appear in the 'other channels' tab in the options section. It won't go back to its old channel number, you will always need to find it here.

While on the topic of TV, the Maxxis British championship is now to be shown on Eurosport instead of Sky Sports and will be shown a week after each event in between broadcasts of other two-wheeled motorsport such as WSB and BSB, forcing our domestic series down the retinas of a wide biking-friendly audience.

Since the creation of the MXY2 series, which runs alongside the Maxxis British MX1 and MX2 championships, it has been regarded as the most important series for young riders to showcase their talents. But it was recently established that in fact the BYN Open class is the premier championship for youthful 250F riders in the UK and the Maxxis MXY2 series carries no weight at all. In fact, it comes with

no title at the end of it and is seen by the ACU as merely a support-only championship to the Maxxis big boys.

The exciting Monster Energy Arenacross Tour concluded at Wembley and climaxed with the thunder! It was an electrifying series and anyone who witnessed it first-hand will attest to that. But no-one was prepared for what happened at the final round to determine the championship.

The protagonists were Cedric Soubeyras, Thomas Ramette and Cyrille Coulon as they entered the final round classified in that order. The Main Event was one of the craziest races in recent memory with tensions high as Ramette looked to close five points on Soubeyras in the final race of the series.

The two championship contenders, running one-two, traded paint for the opening seven laps before an aggressive move by SR75 Molson Racing Suzuki team rider Ramette put Geartec Yamaha's Soubeyras over a berm. By the time he recovered he was just ahead of >>



Ramette's team-mate Coulon who, aggrieved by Soubeyras' aggression towards him all year but particularly in the earlier head-to-head races, got all MMA on his ass and took both riders down.

Clearly pissed, Soubeyras picked his bike up and tried to throw it at Coulon before remounting and intentionally blocking Ramette to the point he relinquished the lead to Adam Chatfield.

Anyway, long story short, the two championship rivals traded more paint before Soubeyras pulled a wild move of his own, put himself into the cheap seats and got DQ'd for his actions. Chatfield went on to win the night but Ramette took the championship.

In the days following the final curtain the MCF announced an investigation into the race and dangerous riding involved, claiming a line had been crossed. The end result was that Coulon was also disqualified, bumping Chatfield up to third place in the final championship standings.

Hands up who knew this – James Stewart is married! Yeah, me neither. Apparently, he's been spliced a little while now but he and his wife have chosen not to make it public and last month it came out that they are officially expecting a baby boy later this year. After ringing his bell at the opening round Bubba eventually made a comeback to competition at round eight of the AMA Monster Energy Supercross series and carded a lacklustre 14th in the Main Event. It's hardly a result you'd expect the man heralded as, on his day, the fastest rider on the planet to be happy with but

as it was his first completed SX race since April 2014 he claimed to be content.

Late last season Nathan Watson announced that he was leaving the motocross track and going to dodge trees in Enduro 1 on a 250F for the KTM factory team instead – despite having never even competed in a timecard enduro. Nate Dawg definitely has the skills to pay the bills on a scrambler regardless of the discipline though and won at his first attempt as an enduro rider when he entered the opening round of the Italian championship earlier this year.

Many questioned Watson's surprise move from motocross to enduro but he's definitely looking good. Leading the pack home on day one in Lignano, Watson repeated that performance on day two to edge out former world champions Alex Salvini, Johnny Aubert and Eero Remes for the overall victory. Nice one! It'll be interesting to follow his progress throughout this season.

In extreme circles Wade Young took his first major win on European shores with victory at Hell's Gate. Featuring a much revised format for 2016, Hell's Gate was a little tamer than previous years with iconic sections like Cascata, Salamander and Hell's Peak itself missing due to land issues.

But with over 10 hours of racing it was still anything but a walk in the park. First across the line, Young took an emotional win, repaying Sherco's faith in supplying him with factory equipment for 2016.

Forced to work overtime due to a shockingly

bad start, Jarvis was unable to place better than second. Without the hardship of Cascata or Salamander for Jarvis to get his teeth stuck into he couldn't work his magic.

But turning his fortunes around two weeks later at the Michelin Tough One, Grimbo claimed his first win of 2016. At the final ever Tough One – and in fittingly horrendous conditions – Jarvis kept a hungry David Knight at bay to take the win.

Staying outdoors for round three of the SuperEnduro series – it was an open air affair, yes, see what we did there – and Jonny Walker is now leading the world championship by 11 points. After a two-month break, Walker came out swinging in Argentina. Two points behind closest rival Cody Webb entering the race in Pinamar, Walker delivered his best performance of the series to date.

Lightning fast out of the starting gate for race one of three, he claimed the first win of the night. Backing that up with another victory in race two before overcoming a poor start to finish second in race three, Jonny topped the podium for the first time this year. And with Webb not having the greatest of nights it ensured Walker left Argentina smiling with the points lead. Webb struck back in Mexico but our fave Cumbrian (eh) still leads with two more rounds squashed into three weeks. I hardly need to tell you that everyone here at DBR Towers has their fingers and toes crossed for Walker to bring home gold.





Sherco's Wade Young landed his first major European Extreme Enduro win with victory at Hell's Gate in Italy. Delivering a solid performance, the young South African held off Husqvarna's Graham Jarvis to take

Winning at his very first time of asking, Young controlled the race from start to finish. Topping the morning's qualification race from Mario Roman (Husqvarna), Young then took the holeshot in the Main Event and never looked back after making short work of the revised course.

A bad start for Jarvis saw him playing catch-up and from near last he worked his way through traffic. Catching the top five, he then battled his way into second by mid-distance but by then Young was too far ahead and he was forced to settle for second. Roman completed the top three.



Nathan Watson - the new kid on the block in enduro - claimed a debut victory at the opening round of the Italian Enduro Championship.

Despite having never competed in a timecard enduro, KTM's new rookie led home a stacked field of top talent in Lignano, Italy, to secure a very surprising double win.

Mastering the tough sandy beach special test with ease, Watson topped day one ahead of fellow MXGP ex-pat Davide Guarneri (Honda) with Matt Phillips (Sherco) third. Repeating his win on day two, this time Watson led home Guarneri and former world champions Johnny Aubert (Beta) and Alex Salvini (Beta) to secure the overall victory.

ISDE 2016 CHANGES

This year's ISDE in Spain will see a revised format to both the World Trophy and Junior World Trophy teams.

For the first time in over 60 years the FIM has decided to reduce both team sizes. The World Trophy team will be downsized from six riders to four while the Junior Trophy team gets chopped from four riders to three. The Women's World Trophy and club classes remain unchanged.

Preliminary entries for the 2016 ISDE at Circuito Navarra, Spain, on October 11-16 are capped at 753 riders. There will also be a new FIM Vintage Trophy class for 2016.













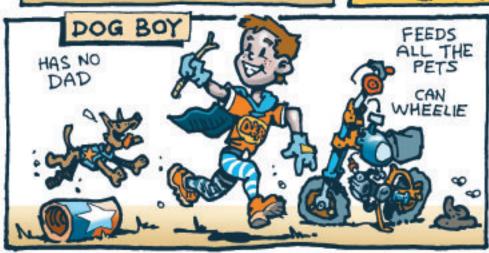


























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WAS GAJSER'S DOMINANCE SUCH A SURPRISE?

Even if his MXGP peers had seen warning signs of Gajser's form and capabilities on the works CRF450RW (exactly the same technical provisions as afforded to Gautier Paulin – who was wildly off-song at Losail – and Evgeny Bobryshev) during the pre-season there are not many at Losail who would have predicted a double moto success (#243's first) and with margins of more than seven and then eight seconds of victory respectively.

Gajser – the youngest ever MXGP/MX1 Grand Prix winner at 19 (and confounding Jeffrey Herlings' past claims that sub-20 was an age too young for the premier class and the 450) – admitted at the media pre-event opportunity on Thursday that he himself had no idea where he'd slot into the running. If MXGP was rocked by a rookie in 2015 and Romain Febvre's emergence, then this was another reminder of the rude health of the premier class in terms of talent feeding inwards.

At the foundation of Gajser's triumph were two excellent starts...and prowess out of the gate was one of Honda's slight weaknesses in 2015. With Bobryshev and Paulin also figuring among the leaders around the first corner it seems that the red camp have upped their game.

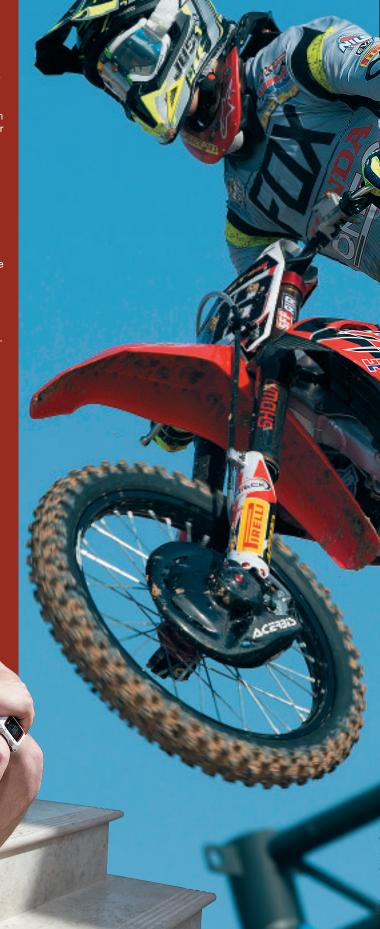
Rockstar IceOne Husqvarna's Max Nagl enjoyed the same flightiness in 2015 and around the wide, fast and strange patchwork of Qatari terrain it seemed that this aspect of the race was nigh-on essential for podium potential. Gajser was also faultless in his performances, something that could not be said of Febvre or Bobryshev. He also avoided bad luck – a malaise that struck Paulin and the '21' engine.

Overall Gajser was superior and then fantastically nonchalant when acknowledging his win afterwards. It's as if the kid is destined to succeed and is becoming adept at taking it in his stride. Crucially (and worryingly for his rivals) he seems a far more natural fit on the bigger bike...a model that he freely admits he used for training in the past two years and while competing in MX2.

On the CRF250RW Gajser was often asking more of the Honda, and pushing the engine and revs for all it was worth. On the 450 he does not have this agitation. It is almost as if he has been able to calm and focus his style and in Qatar this early phase of his transition worked to powerful effect.

For the record both Febvre and Cairoli claimed they were not surprised that Gajser had won...

36 dirtbikerider



Tim Gajser immediately made his presence felt in the MXGP division



UNDERWEAR FOR THE EXTREVIE





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ABSTRACT - CARBON DIGI-CAM - JUNGLE CAMO - SKULL CHECK



It is hard to tell with Dylan. The fiery Frenchman has a volatile character often prone to drama and also deep reflection. In terms of technique he is more precise and measured than Herlings but is also prone to admitting defeat to any problems. Ferrandis has suffered almost a similar rate of injury misfortune to Herlings in the past five years some almost as serious but at a significantly lower scale (no championships lost). Shoulder and knee

rebuilds are among the tales of woe. He is still Kawasaki's leading light in MX2 and admitted he was deeply concerned about the Monster Energy Kawasaki team's switch to Showa suspension and the Cosworth engine development

plan overseen by Steve Dixon, a rare example of a manufacturer synergising racing efforts and engineering across teams in one class. In Qatar Ferrandis credited the "day and night" work of his team in turning around a KX250F that he apparently treated in disgust at the LaCapelle Marival International a week previously to a bike that gave

him two shining starts and allowed him to lead Herlings for 10 of the 18 laps in the first moto. It was odd watching a Kawasaki pull away from a KTM on the faster parts of Losail. Ferrandis could end up being Herlings' closest challenger (how long will Max Anstie need to gain confidence on the Husqvarna after

his catalogue of ill luck in Qatar?) but the imperious nature of the way Jeffrey took control of MX2 when he felt like it at this race indicates the outlook is bleak for what it surely to be the former champion's

20 RIDER GATES BE HERE TO STAY?

There are two perspectives to an argument that is not new and has been an affliction of MXGP - and other global racing series - for a number of years and with the high cost of committing to an international championship that visits other continents. In fact it is hard to think of a world-ranging competition that does have an over-subscribed entry and doesn't have an elitist, fixed list of approved teams and riders/drivers.

The first view is that the skeletal gate is as far removed as you can get from the accessible roots of the sport and around even a 1650m layout the practice sessions looked sparse. The other view is that the vast majority of the field

boast Grand Prix podium experience and there is real depth outside of the top 10 and down near the rear of the pack.

Backmarkers are almost a forgotten hazard and it was only three minutes from the end of the first moto in Losail that Gajser and Bobryshev overtook the lagging Clement Desalle (who then immediately retired with a faulty engine). More help from the series promoter to travel overseas - and this is something that road racing has - would mean more participants.

The point of view of the promoter is that they provide the framework and window for marketing of the sport and it is up to the teams to exploit the opportunities. Is it a case of opening a vast double door for a mouse? Is the scene now too big in ambition and scope for the people that can and want to take part?

Perhaps, but then it is also a strategy towards possible growth and the manufacturers involved are in-tune with the attempts

to expand the word of MXGP. Competing at the highest level now means a fantastically high standard (both on the track and off it). To make the journey(s) worthwhile the teams have to be able to manage, and that includes having a calibre of athlete ready to offer exposure and that's where another bottleneck comes in. It is hard to find a clear-cut solution aside from chucking money that doesn't exist at the situation and MXGP is not overwhelming wealthy enough to do that, generating not even a fraction of what sports like MotoGP earn in TV rights.

On another note connected to the subject, Grand Prix points used to have a high value and hard-earned worth but seeing as merely attending an overseas event means a boost to a scorecard it could be time for a review of the award system and maybe grant points down to 15th instead?





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WHO WILL BE TOP BRIT?

The last two laps of the second MXGP moto saw a fantastic scrap between Shaun Simpson and Tommy Searle for seventh position. Simpson having lost the rear wheel of Max Nagl and Searle charging while expelling some of the injury demons and poor luck of the last three years. The Kawasaki rider - bizarrely dealing with a 'wardrobe malfunction' with his race pants – drew alongside the KTM several times but Simpson made himself wide and was quicker in several key sections of the course.

Both racers have different agendas for 2016. Simpson (27) is gunning for the top three in the world and more Grand Prix wins while Searle (25) has to be more modest in his recovery back to the sort of heights that made him one of the most sought-after athletes in the world championship just four years ago.

It could be easier and quicker for Tommy (seventh overall in Qatar) to show signs of progress while Shaun (sixth) has to maximise his new race preparation programme and the Wilvo Virus Performance KTM to make that breach into being a regular podium contender. Both are well supported in terms of the teams behind them and it is hard to remember two Brits with the same level of possibilities for a number of years in the premier class. Don't be surprised to see these two clash again on the dirt and Qatar provided small, early signs of a possible British duel happening in MXGP.

Losail saw desperately bad luck for Adam Sterry with a broken lower arm (after casing a double and snapping the bone through handlebar impact), Anstie with starts and crashes while Ben Watson showed improved speed on a stock Husky FC250 in a rough-andready racing set-up that really should have been far better supported. He was present thanks to a personal sponsor that covered the costs of the trip.

'It was such a last minute move to get here," he said. "Thanks to Contract Furnisher UK we brought my forks and an FMF exhaust and put it on a brand new bike from a dealer that drove 10 hours from Dubai to get here. It shows what a good bike the stock Husqvarna is and I'm pretty happy considering.

Alfie Smith was also on the sidelines while Alex Snow picked up a point on the JK Yamaha.





IS THIS A NEW ERA FOR HRC?

It is too early and very unclear to determine if one of the most naturally talented athletes in MXGP will be able to use a CRF450RW to contend for the world championship (Honda chasing their first in the premier class since 2000, if the 250cc division can be considered so).

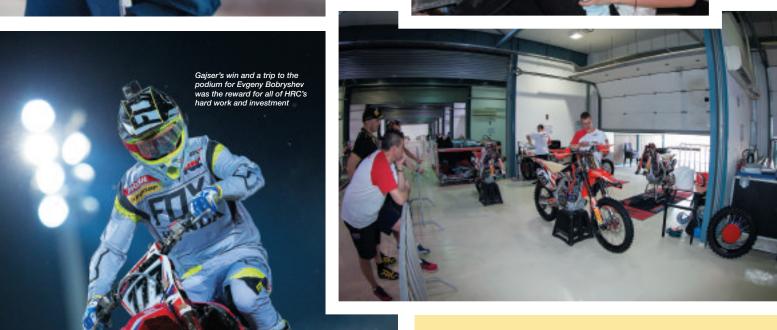
Gautier Paulin did nothing to indicate his slightly blunted efforts of 2015 had gone despite his own personal investment in seeking Aldon Baker's help over the winter. However across the rest of the red pit boxes the bike has clearly found willing hands with the two riders that sat in the podium press conference on Saturday night at Losail.

Motocross, as with any sport, can be cyclical in nature. KTM have enjoyed an amazing patch of success thanks to their 350SX-F, a superb Sicilian and a remarkable 450SX-F that could be shifting their prolificacy across the Atlantic. At the beginning of the last decade it was Yamaha celebrating serial championships. Kawasaki had a blip in MX2 as did Yamaha and Suzuki in MX1 (MXGP) '07 and '08 and Yamaha have roared again. Could it be time for HRC to re-enter the annals?

With Bobryshev firing back on four cylinders instead of the three of 2015, Gajser full of verve and youthful exuberance and Paulin still a mystery the marque (that were second and third in the championship last year don't forget) is sitting sweet.

On a technical side HRC boasted superb resources once more in terms of staff and technology in Losail. The works team had switched to FMF pipes and had upgraded their own electronics system substantially. Bobryshev praised the '16 version of his race bike and Gajser as well cited the fruits of all the testing mileage that forced the Slovenian to put his winter supercross plans on hold until the end of 2016.





AND IN THE END...

Qatar is still a novelty Grand Prix with no discernible increase in crowd size or interest among the region after four editions but still ranks as one of the best organised, easiest and most favoured sites to launch the season with the riders lapping up the favourable temperatures compared to most of Europe and obscure posturnal setting.

of Europe and obscure nocturnal setting.

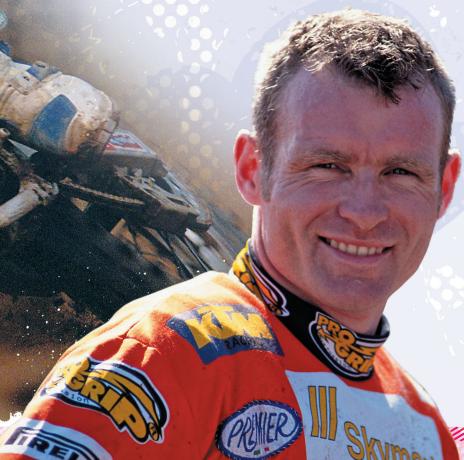
A surprise in MXGP and a shock in WMX where Kiwi rookie Courtney Duncan blitzed the female field and provided a lesson to the established girls like Kiara Fontanesi and Livia Lancelot, accompanied by some vintage Herlings provided enough of an appetiser to launch a lengthy MXGP year where – once again – the fittest and smartest will prosper just as much as the fastest.



Every Counts!

A FOUR-TIME 500CC VICE-CHAMPION, KURT NICOLL IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE GREATEST MOTOCROSS RIDER NEVER TO WIN A WORLD TITLE...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Jack Burnicle



urt Nicoll is a changed man.
When we meet up on a Friday
morning in a York hotel he's
relaxed and smiling, laughs
often and is very, very candid.
It's all a far cry from the
super-serious, tense, brooding racer
who finished second in the world on
four occasions.

Kurt then and Kurt now are like chalk and cheese and he doesn't need me to point this out (although I do).

"I think I was too fu*king miserable most of the time," he says with a smile. "I should probably have had more fun than I did just because I was too serious about racing and that definitely came across and made me seem like I was miserable. If I could go back I would definitely change that, there's no doubt.

"I would try to be less serious and I would definitely try to have more time for fans, more time for journalists, more time for everybody. No doubt I would say that I regret that. I was the way that I was but I don't think it was necessarily right."

If there's one thing Kurt isn't during the course of our interview it's 'fu*king miserable'. Far from it. I'm not going to pepper this feature with *laughs* to indicate every time he cracks a joke but, take it from me, when he describes himself that way it's with a big helping of humour that permeates our entire hour-long talk.

A handsome, young-looking 51, Kurt's clearly in great shape thanks to a twice-a-week riding habit and as Vice President of Global Touring for Nitro Circus Live he's arguably even more successful off a bike than he was on one. And make no mistake, despite never winning

a world title he was a very successful racer.

From his world 500cc debut in 1983 until he initially retired at the end of the 1997 season he won 13 GPs (11 in the 500cc class and two on a 250), seven ACU British titles (six Open class, one 250) and was on the winning team at the '94 Motocross des Nations. Not only that, he was also the 2004 and 2009 AMA supermoto champion, scored a hat-trick of AMA Vet endurocross titles from 2011 to 2013 and was named AMA Vet Racer of the Year in 2012.

It's also worth remembering that Kurt has never been a man to look for the easy option. As a teenager he went straight into the premier 500cc class and in 1993, when the 250cc class was elevated to blue riband status, he switched down instead of staying put and vastly increasing his chances of collecting a world title.

So despite the disappointments – the biggest coming in 1991 and '92 – looking back it's fair to say Kurt's lived a charmed life and, the cherry on top, he now lives in SoCal and gets to hang out with Travis Pastrana and the rest of the Nitro Circus crew.

"It's a crazy lifestyle. I'm trying to run the business so it's not all fun for me but you're in among fun people and everyone's doing what they love doing and getting paid money for it. We have a sh*t-ton of fun."

Mixing with Pastrana and his merry band has had a big influence on Kurt who's clearly not afraid to join in with the Nitro madness.

"I went down the Giganta ramp on one of those trikes because I was fed up of people saying I'd never done it so I did it once – but I feel no need to do it again! I tried to learn to backflip because they all said I should but I crashed on about my third one on a bicycle off the side of the foam pit and hurt my shoulder so I quit that idea. I do some crap that I shouldn't allow myself at my age to be talked into doing.

"I jump freestyle ramps all the time – 75ft, the normal gap – but I don't do any tricks unless you count one-handers or butt-whips!"

Kurt Nicoll hitting FMX ramps? If you'd predicted that 20 years ago no-one would have believed you but, then again, his career path has been anything but predictable.

Born in Bishop Stortford, Kurt lived in Saffron Walden before moving closer to Cambridge. His dad, Dave, was a factory motocross racer and GP winner but, surprisingly, Kurt was a late starter.

"I began racing in '79 when I was 15. I don't know whether my dad didn't want me to race or if he just never introduced me to racing until



then. I never had a bike until I was about 13, I just played football and cricket and stuff. I went to races with him but I don't think I was ever aware that kids could ride."

Back in the day specialised MX machines for children were non-existent and like many of his peers Kurt learned to ride on a series of home-brewed specials.

"I had old pieces of crap – old modified mopeds and trail bikes. My first motocross bike was a new Suzuki 125 RM which would have been Christmas 1978 or '79 and I started racing a few months after.

"I was good instantly if I remember right but it's all a long time ago. I won a schoolboy title I think in 1980 on one of the first water-cooled Kawasakis when Alec Wright was running schoolboy stuff with Team Green.

"Dad was Motocross des Nations Team

Manager then so I think he had a lot to do with Alec and everybody that was around. I think what happened was I was riding Suzukis and the main shafts were breaking on them every week or every couple of weeks and dad couldn't keep up with working on them because he was away all the time. So Alec stepped up with that bike which we basically took because we couldn't keep the other one together."

Straight away Kurt knew the career path he wanted to take and his trademark determination was evident from the outset.

"I think I knew or expected to be a motocross professional from the first time I raced and I think that was maybe because my dad was and because I was around professional racers and I never really expected to do anything else. I don't know why I was so damned confident but it just seemed like there was no other path."

Rather than work his way up to the big time, Kurt dived straight in at the deep end and kicked off his GP career in 1983 on a 500cc Kawasaki.

"I think back then it seemed quite natural – 250 racing was 'B' racing in England at that time so I think if you wanted to be world champion you had to be world champion in the 500 class. I was quite tall and quite big and I went from a 125 to a 500 straight away. It didn't seem weird. I think I always thought that as soon as I finished schoolboys I'd ride 500s. It just seemed normal at the time."

It was hardly a glorious debut. Just four scoring rides saw him end the season in 26th but after switching to KTM he advanced to eighth the following year.

"I hurt myself in '83 – I dislocated my shoulder – so I missed quite a few races and







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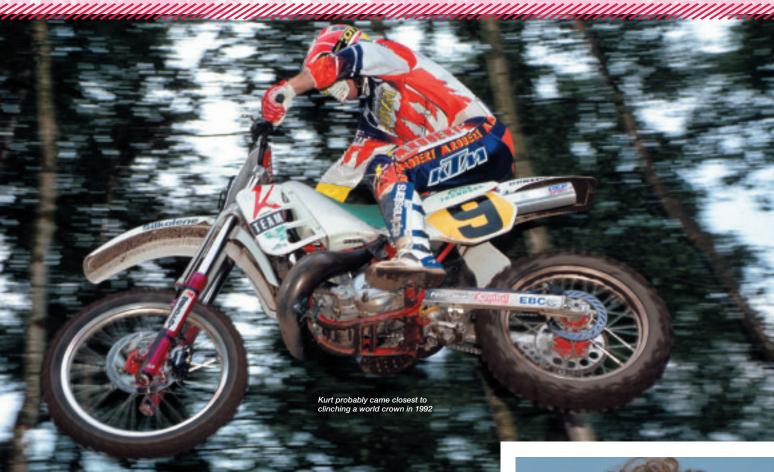


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the points only went down to 10th at that time.

I remember running a lot of 11ths and 12ths that first year but then it could be the points went to 15th in '84 [they did] or I was getting more top 10s but I progressed pretty quickly.

"It was KTM UK at the beginning of '84 and then I got help from the factory during '84 – basically after Graham Noyce quit – but I rode the air-cooled bike all year and then got a factory water-cooled bike in '85."

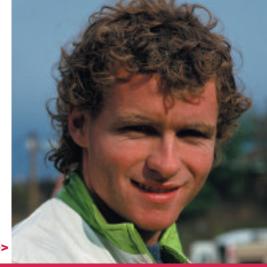
Noyce, the '79 world 500cc champion, was a hero of Kurt's although the contrast between the two – Noycey was a legendary hell-raiser, making him an unlikely role-model for the straight-laced Kurt – couldn't have been more marked.

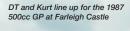
"He was everybody's hero back then and definitely my hero for sure because he was world champion in '79 and then that short ill-fated time he rode KTM I spent a winter with him down at Golding Barn. He was just an awesome rider."

After moving up to fifth on the factory Toomer in '85, Kurt was back on a Kawasaki the following year and slipped a couple of places but after a season of adjustment he made a breakthrough in '87, ending the year second in the world and scoring his first GP moto win at Farleigh Castle and his first overall in Holland.

"Alec was in charge of the grand prix team then. I can't even remember why I went to KTM as opposed to staying with Kawasaki after '83. But Alec and dad were always pretty close and so maybe they worked out a deal but I honestly can't remember now.

"The '87 season was a great year for me. I think at that time me and dad were the first father and son to win GPs so that was







GREATEST RIVAL

DAVE THORPE

Kurt's greatest rival? It's no surprise when, without hesitation, he singles out Dave Thorpe.

"Certainly in England we had years there where we were fighting together for titles and we went through ups and downs like you do when you race but he was a great racer. A really great racer."

Does he feel like he played second fiddle to the three-time world champion?

"Yeah, I probably do because the results speak for themselves and the titles speak for themselves. If you look at who was the best British rider through the '80s then it's going to be David and that doesn't make me particularly happy because I would rather it was me.

"But, as I said, he was a great racer with great equipment and used every advantage he had – and it's still better to be second than third."

Is it fair to say that Dave had more natural

talent but Kurt worked harder to get up to GP-winning standard?

"That's possibly the case but I think David worked super-hard as well. Whether he had a little bit more natural talent I'm still not sure about that. If David had one thing over me which I will admit to it's that I do think I did put too much pressure on myself. It did matter too much and I didn't always get 100 per cent out of myself and I think he did during his best times so, probably more than talent, he just had that edge.

"He had really good bikes, he had his dad as mechanic, a set-up he really believed in and just mentally he was really strong and mentally I think I sometimes defeated myself when I should have been more competitive. I don't think it came down to talent.

"I don't think it ever mattered as much with Georges Jobe because he was Belgian. Jobe beat me twice and Eric Geboers beat me twice but I think it was more important for me to beat David."

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awesome. I didn't really get anywhere near the title [he was 55 points behind Georges Jobe] but I progressed all the way through and got better as the year went on.

"I won some races and Farleigh was great that year. Home GPs were amazing back then – Farleigh Castle and Hawkstone, there were so many people."

The following year brought another FIM silver medal but this time Kurt was closer to the crown, finishing 21 points behind the factory Honda of Eric Geboers and winning GPs in Switzerland and Luxembourg.

"Second will become a recurring theme as we go through these years! I was actually much more ready to challenge for the title in '88 and I won early in Switzerland. Eric wasn't that strong at the beginning of the year and David [Thorpe] hurt himself but Eric got stronger and he was better than I was.

"It was difficult to compete with the Hondas so we were always battling against that and I hate to make excuses but there used to be differences in the bikes. Nowadays you could take the bike in 20th place and give it to Ryan Dungey and he'd still go out and win but back then there were big differences and Hondas just won all the time. I totally recognised that.

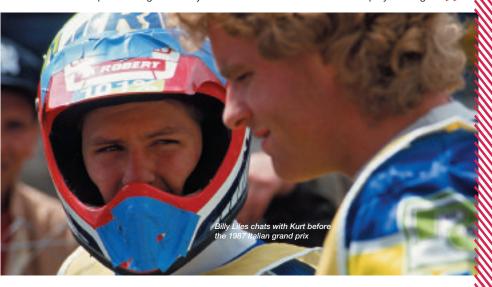
"At the end of '87 I spoke to Honda and basically said 'give me factory bikes and I'll ride for free' because I wanted to win so badly but Alec made sure that it didn't happen."

With Thorpe heading home a Honda 1-2-3 in 1989, Kurt slipped to fourth and returned to KTM for 1990.

"The KTM was actually a decent bike. The motor was very good – I think the chassis was very much inferior to a Honda and a Kawasaki but the motor was better on the KTM than on almost anything else. I could always get much better starts on a KTM 500 than I could on a Kawasaki so it made a difference. But it still would have been better to have a Honda."

At the time there was a huge difference in culture between Kawasaki and KTM and Kurt felt more at home with the European way of working when it came to trying to compete with the factory Hondas.

"I went and did testing in Japan with Kawasaki but I don't think I played a big



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT #1

1994 MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS

Kurt rates his greatest racing achievement as helping Team GB win the 1994 Motocross des Nations, ending the USA's 13-year win-streak on a momentous September day at Roggenburg in Switzerland.

On a track where he'd enjoyed considerable success in the past, Kurt ran 3-2 in the 500cc class to top the team category alongside Paul Malin and Robbie Herring.

"It was an absolutely amazing experience, the whole thing. I had a hate/love relationship with the Motocross des Nations. All through the '80s whenever I raced it I never had any luck. I crashed and got concussion in Sweden, I crashed and broke my thumb in France. I actually didn't even ride in 1990. They picked me and I said 'no, I don't want to ride, it's always a disaster'.

"Then when we went to Australia in '92 I won the 500 class there and I won the 250 class in '93 in Austria and then we won overall in '94. They were absolutely some of the greatest races I can remember. Even '97 – my last race as a professional – I won one of the heats in Nismes in Belgium."

Thorpe was team boss in 1994 and Kurt feels his long-term rival played a big part in their success.

"David was a natural-born winner and he'd obviously done a lot of Motocross des Nations and what he did in '93 and '94 was to bring the riders together and create a team unity.

"Motocross is a 100 per cent individual sport so being a team that races for each other doesn't really work but David did a really good job. I think his input was really important plus his winning mentality definitely helped as well."





part in development but I did with KTM, always. The KTM R&D department back then was just a couple of people so it was very, very almost family-orientated and we developed the bikes as we went. The development of the production bikes at KTM went hand-in-hand with the factory bikes and you didn't have that with a Japanese company.

"I guess it was just the way the system was back then with KTM. I still really enjoyed riding KTM, I enjoyed being a part of it, I enjoyed tailoring the bikes to myself and I know I liked it better at KTM than I did at Kawasaki because I felt part of it.

"So I don't think it [R&D] was a disadvantage because at least I could change the bike and keep working on it whereas at Kawasaki you couldn't really change the bike at all and I never felt it was quite good enough so I was kinda stuck with it. At KTM maybe it wasn't quite good enough but at least I could keep working on it."

Second in 1990, again to Geboers, Kurt kicked the 1991 season off in great form and won the opening world championship round in Switzerland and backed this up with victory at round three in Sweden. Then, with a healthy championship lead, his title ambitions came crashing back to earth at the Dutch GP.

"I broke my femur in Holland in practice. I just whisky throttled on a jump, went way up in the air and had to jump off which sucked because I was something like 50 points in front at that point but it was just my mistake. I messed up.

"I think I rode equally as well in '93 and '94 on the 250s but my best chances to win the world title were definitely in '91 and '92. In '91 >>>



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT #2 JAMIE DOBB'S WORLD TITLE

In the mid to late '90s one of Britain's biggest talents was without doubt Jamie Dobb. A winner in Europe and the USA, Dobb was blazingly fast but never managed to put all the pieces of the puzzle together – until he hooked up with Kurt

"My greatest achievement as Team Manager was Jamie winning the 125cc world title in 2001. I said motocross was an individual sport and there is very little that a Team Manager can do apart from organise good mechanics and create a good infrastructure – actually having a massive influence on a rider is very difficult. But I did with Jamie, no doubt.

"I don't know what he would say about this but I don't think he would have won a world title without me. Joel Smets would have won a world title without me – no question about it – but I don't think Jamie would have done.

"He was only with me for two years. The rest of his career there were questionable things that he did and I'm sure that he would admit this. But for two years he was really concentrated and had great bikes and we had a really good thing going.

"I really enjoyed doing that with someone who was younger than me but not dramatically younger so we could ride together."



I should have won if I didn't make that mistake – I've no doubt at all – and in '92 I made other mistakes which meant that I didn't win. I felt like I was the strongest rider in '91 and '92."

The 1992 season was particularly cruel for Kurt with the turning point coming in front of his home fans at the British GP. With the championship just past the halfway point and Kurt in great form he fell foul of the motocross maxim that states you never pull out of a race.

"That was when the start gate jammed at Hawkstone Park and, in retrospect, I just screwed myself up. At the time I blamed it all on the start gate. The fact is I pulled out of that race when I probably could have got 12th or something which would have won the title.

"Then we went to France the week after and I rode crap there as well. The best race was the

last race and then the crankshaft broke on the bike and I went from probably leading to being miles behind in a matter of two or three weeks which all spiralled downhill from that start gate jamming. I should have coped with it better."

Kurt rallied to win the final three GPs of the year but lost to Jobe by just two points.

"I was probably not as cool and collected as people thought. When you look back when you've got time to reflect, I wanted to win so badly and put absolutely everything into it all of the time. It got me a great career and it was a long career but in some way I always felt I was racing at 90 per cent because I was always counting points and I was always worried about every detail.

"Now when I race I race without a care in the world and race at 100 per cent all the time. I'm

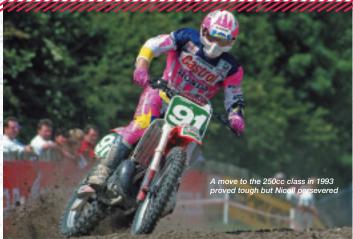
just too old to race fast enough anymore!

"So things like that Hawkstone start gate, I wasn't as cool as I should have been. I should have just put that behind me and gone to the start for the second race and not even thought about it but I didn't. It's the biggest regret of my career, no doubt. It's a long, long time ago and doesn't worry me anymore but it worried me for a long time."

With GPs at that time contested over three motos, Kurt's recovery was Herculean and he won eight of the last nine races but Jobe sealed the title with three second places behind Kurt in Switzerland.

"Once I was 40 points behind and the title was pretty much gone I rode much better without all the pressure I would put upon myself. I rode freely and rode really, really









OLD DOG...

...NEW TRICKS?

Kurt's still super-fast and, as we already know, he's not afraid to attempt to backflip or hit a freestyle ramp but one modern riding technique continues to frustrate him.

"When I ride motocross the one technique which still completely eludes me is scrubbing and that is kinda annoying because I'm still fast compared to kids but they stay so much lower on the jumps. I can do it on slow jumps but on fast jumps I'm not going to turn the wheel, I just want to get to the downslope.

"I just love riding. I still ride motocross because I still enjoy motocross more than anything else but I've done a ton of off-road. Whenever I can I go out to the desert for the weekend and ride and I spend all my holidays riding in the desert. I would ride more if I had more time and didn't have to work for a living."

There's no doubt that Kurt would be a huge draw if he ever rode at the Vets MXdN – after all, there's no need to be able to scrub to race Farleigh – but work commitments and his still fiercely competitive nature make it unlikely.

"My problem is I ride at least twice a week. I won the Vet world championship at Glen Helen in the 40-plus class when I'm 51 and I'm still super-competitive and the only way I want to go to Farleigh is if I can work the bike out and if I can ride it and do it properly. I would hate to go there and get beaten by Brian Wheeler – that would really piss me off!

"I was going to do it in 2012. I got one of my KTM's back, my brother Aaron had it and he prepped it all up and I had this big plan to come over the week before the race. Then we put a 3D movie out three weeks before which was an horrendous flop at the box office and there was no way I could go and play at Farleigh Castle.

"If I lived in England I'd do it for sure and then I'd do it properly and try and win."

KURT ON...

HIS CAREER PATH

Kurt was KTM's Motocross Team Manager in 1999 until 2002, then became Director of Racing in Austria until 2006 when he moved to California as Director of Racing in the USA.

In 2009 he left KTM to become Chief Operational Officer for Godfrey Entertainment before the company eventually merged with an Australian firm to form Nitro Circus Live.

"I went straight from racing full-time to being Team Manager to Director of Racing and I think I was good at both but it was also at a time when KTM was in a massive growth period and started to become a much bigger company. It began to become very structured which I didn't really enjoy and some of the fun went out of it.

"Once I was in California for a few years I started to realise it was nice not to travel every single weekend to a motocross race somewhere – I just got burnt out of going to the races.

Kurt also found he had less and less in common with the riders he was overseeing.

"When I was first Team Manager my riders were people like Peter Johansson and Joel Smets and Shayne King - people I'd raced with - and Jamie Dobb. I was very close with them, had great empathy with them, I understood them and I think it helped me to do a good job so it was great.

'That just faded away as time went on and by the time I didn't want to be Director of Racing anymore I had guys like Josh Hansen and Martin Davalos - kids that were nearly 30 years

vounger than me.

"I hadn't got a damn clue what was in their minds and I got really fed up of the fact that what I was working really hard at was reliant on 17-year-old kids riding around in stadiums in circles.

"That age difference definitely changed things and whereas I felt great empathy and totally understood what Shayne King and Peter Johansson and Jamie Dobb were doing. By the time I got in my mid-40s that connection was gone.

Luckilv. these days he doesn't necessarily need to understand what goes on inside Travis Pastrana's head all the time but he does work closely with the FMX superstar.

"He doesn't have any business sense whatsoever but he's involved from a creative standpoint in the business and he works with our Creative Director [Mike Porra] who's also the CEO of the company on all the show plans, all the media stuff and so I work with Travis every day.

"I oversee all the touring. We were a TV and movie company when I first started there and then I was organising TV shows and video production and all that sort of stuff. Then we started live touring in 2010 and that business took off way more than the TV business was going so that became the most important thing and now we're doing 100 shows a year.

"Next year we'll be doing shows in the States at the same time as we're doing shows in England. It's a big business now. It's grown unbelievably quickly.'





well. I don't know if I could do it differently but if I could go back and put less pressure on myself then it would be great.

"But then maybe I wouldn't have done what I've done because I cared so much and put so much effort into it? I don't know, it's my nature and that's something that's really difficult to change. It is what it is."

When the emphasis switched from 500s to 250s in 1993, instead of staying put and cherry-picking a world crown - Jacky Martens, 11th in '92, won the title - Kurt moved to the new elite class.

"I really wanted to win 'the' world title but I didn't necessarily want to win 'a' world title - I wanted to race in the premier class. If I could go back I might change that idea because now if I had a 1993 500cc world title no-one would know if it was the premier class or not."

Racing a HRC-kitted bike for Castrol Honda in 1993 and '94, Kurt finished fourth in his first year on the 250 behind Greg Albertyn, Stefan Everts and Donny Schmit and slipped to fifth the following season but won the German GP at Gaildorf.

For 1995 he was back up to fourth on a full-factory Honda and won the Irish GP at Cork before returning to KTM in '96 for a season he'd rather forget. dipublikerider



"That was a total development bike at KTM and I didn't get any decent results because the bike wasn't very good at all and then, when we got the bike a little bit better and I started to get some decent results midway through the year, I crashed and dislocated my hip at Foxhill and missed the rest of the season.'

Kurt's final full season of GPs came in 1997 when he returned to the 500s racing a KTM and finished the year fourth with an overall win in Luxembourg.

"I was due to race in '98 on a 380 but I crashed and broke my elbow in 13 places pre-season in France at my house. The doctors told me my elbow would never function again because it was so badly broken so I decided to call it guits. The elbow has healed and I've not had any trouble with it ever since.

"It was tough - really tough - to guit but I fell into a really good situation because KTM had just set up KTM UK as a subsidiary company and I had a contract at KTM so they honoured the contract and asked if I could help.

"Then halfway through the year I started to go to races with Shayne King to help him and then KTM asked if I might help them set up a factory team for '99 as Motocross Team Manager so I had the perfect soft-landing situation but still



I so badly wanted to go racing again."

That wasn't the end of Kurt's career. He raced the final round of the British championship at Farleigh Castle in '99 and - two years later he finished seventh at the Swiss 500 GP and promptly found himself selected once again for the MXdN, helping Team GB to fourth at Namur.

"I came out of retirement for Roggenburg and then did the Motocross des Nations - that was when I was riding with Jamie [Dobb] all the time. That last Motocross des Nations was an eye-opener for me because I was riding with Jamie a lot - probably twice a week - and I was riding really well and was in great shape.

"So I did Roggenburg just for fun and then they picked me for the Motocross des Nations which was kinda stupid because I'd been retired for four years but it was at Namur so I said I'd do it.

"I had a month to get ready for it and so I started to pick up the training and ride three or four times a week and by the time I got to Namur I was completely tired. My back was hurting again and my hips were hurting and it was then I kinda realised I was past it.

"I love riding twice a week to the level I ride now but if I tried to ride four times a week and do two 40-minute motos I'd last two days."





DAVE THORPE ON... KURT NICOLL

With Kurt naming DT as his career nemesis it seemed like a good idea to get the three-time world champ and Buildbase Honda team owner's take on their rivalry...

"Kurt's family nurtured him really well but they're like mine – they're old-school, they get up in the morning and work hard. He was one of the other riders – and there weren't many around – who had a really good work ethic.

"He had a good trainer in a guy called Roy Carter but I think one of the turning points for Kurt – and he might not remember – was one year when we had the American Grand Prix, a week off and then the Canadian Grand Prix.

"In between we spent a fair bit of time together which we hadn't really done before.

He trained with me through that week and the one thing I did notice was the next year he was a lot more of a threat than he'd ever been.

"Whether he'd gone back to Roy and spoken about how I structured my training and how they structured theirs and had a modification [in his programme] I don't know but he went from being someone who was a little prickle in my side to someone that had become a big thorn. In hindsight I did kick myself a little bit for sharing with him.

"So I'd like to think that time we had together training over there – and he was always, always a hard trainer – might have redirected the effort he put in slightly. I certainly felt that from the year after Kurt was always a big threat.

"I was right behind Kurt in '91 in Holland. I was the first one to him. I stopped straight away because I saw what happened and it didn't look good. Unfortunately, it's one of those things that

makes motocross such a tough sport – it can be so unkind.

"But certainly Kurt was the man to beat in '91 and I don't think there are many people who would challenge the fact that if he didn't have the injury then he would have probably gone on and won that year.

"He was very unlucky not to win a world title and I think there were three factors that had a big impact.

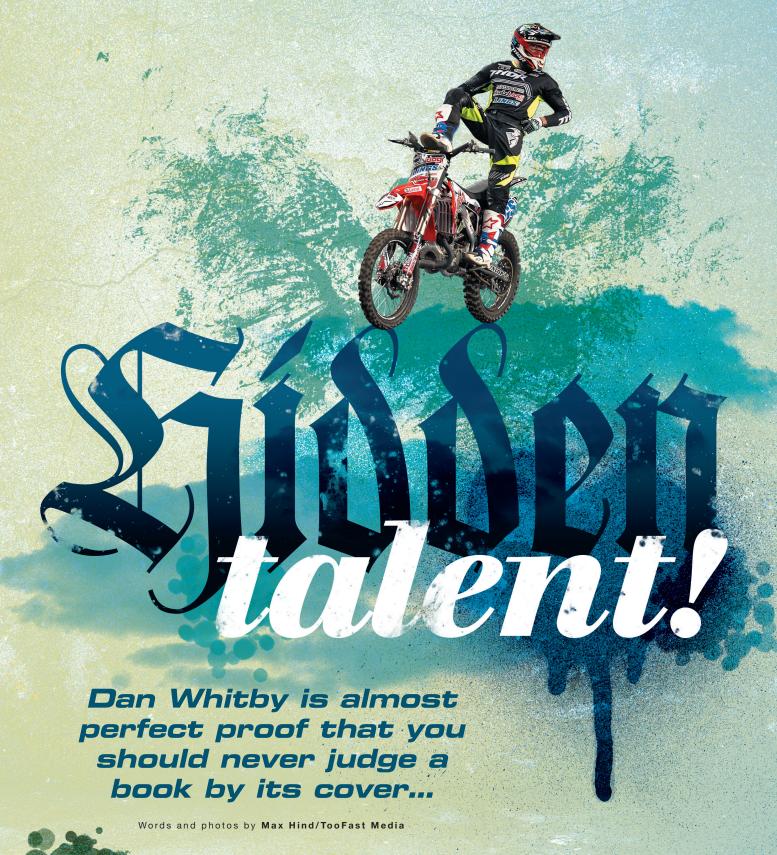
"Firstly, he was up against the might of HRC and that was very unfortunate for anyone who wasn't involved in that team. As much as myself, Andre Malherbe, Eric Geboers and Andre Vromans were all very good riders there were also some other very good riders. What we had and they didn't was the might of HRC behind us and at that point in motocross HRC was head and shoulders above the rest.

"So I think he had the talent to win but he wasn't on a Honda at the time and that's no disrespect to Kawasaki or KTM but the fact is you had an advantage on that bike.

"The second was that at that time there was a big nucleus of people who could potentially win races – probably between seven and 10 people – and I'm not sure there's been another group of riders like that before or since who could win.

"The third thing we've already talked about – he got unlucky with his leg. If he hadn't have had that break he could potentially have been world champion and then been dominant the following season because that's what happens with a world title, you grow in confidence and become a hard animal to beat."





group of business men during the rush hour. The young man with the garment bag over his shoulder is Mert Lawwill.
29 years old, five foot six, 143 pounds. He's not a banker, or an accountant or a salesman but he is a professional man like the rest. His profession? Motorcycle racer...' and so begins the most famous motorcycle documentary ever committed to film.

On any Sunday is probably the most iconic motorcycle movie to have ever been produced and is the sole reason that many a man decided to throw a leg over a motorcycle and take up the sport of dirt bike racing. After the infamous BMX opening titles the film begins with a view of a

crowded city street and the narration above.

When we decided to catch up with FMX ace Dan Whitby for this feature memories of this scene came flooding back. Much like you might if you met Mert Lawwill, if you were to cross paths with Dan Whitby while walking down the street you probably wouldn't think too much more about it. You may acknowledge the bumbling hillbilly vibe that Dan radiates but perhaps not too much else.

In Mert Lawwill's case the suited and booted city folk surrounding him were clueless to the fact that he made a living by skidding a Harley Davidson around at 100mph. In the case of Dan Whitby you just wouldn't know what he's about until A) you watch him on a dirt bike or B) see him half naked. Once you've witnessed either

of those things – or both if you're really lucky – you soon realise that he's a little bit different to the norm! With that in mind our On any Sunday remake would begin a little something like this...

'A group of Norfolk farmers in the rush hour. The young man with the garment bag over his shoulder is Dan Whitby. 32 years old, five foot seven, 168 pounds. He's not a banker, or an accountant or a salesman but he is a professional man like the rest. His profession? FMX star...'
Cue action montage with cheesy soundtrack.

Meanwhile back in the real world we sat down to catch up with Dan at the Newcastle stop of the 2016 Arenacross tour where we soon realised that as well as being a god, Dan Whitby may also be one of the most interesting men in motocross...



DBR: So let's start simple. How did you get started riding bikes?

DW: "My Dad. I pestered my dad flat out for a bike. He eventually got me one, it was a Z50 you know the little sewing machine one! It was my fourth birthday, I clearly remember coming down the stairs and hearing my mum's twin tub washing machine rattling away in the kitchen. I went in and looked to the right. There it was, my little Z50 sparkling clean. I remember it like it was yesterday.

"I then developed some sort of disorder that prevented me from going to school that day - I think I came out in an excitement rash. We had a bit of land in my back garden and I just rode the thing around in a circle until I burned a track into the grass. That then turned into a figure of eight and it started to get crazy from there on out. But that little Z50 was the start of everything for me..."

DBR: Did your dad race?

DW: "My dad had bikes but never did motocross or raced or anything like that. My cousin raced and I remember going to watch him when I was really tiny so I guess I got a little inspiration from there. My dad was heavily into flying. He and his bother actually built a plane together! They built that in the workshop they had. They were working on that most weekends

while I was in the garden just spinning laps and building jumps."

DBR: Once you got going on the bike did you race?

DW: "I didn't race until I was 12 years old. My dad had a theory that I shouldn't be out there racing until I was comfortable mixing it with 20 or 30 other people. So we just went to practice tracks and practiced and practiced until I got a bit of speed. I think I got the bug and wanted to race because my friends at the practice track were racing.

"I eventually had my first race when I was 12. I crashed out on the first lap and that was my day done! There was a ski jump and I launched off it bigger than I should have. I then got piled by everyone else so it was a bit of a steep learning curve to say the least. After that incident I came back and had moderate success in racing from when I was 12 to 17 years old. Then I broke my neck!"

DBR: You broke it racing?

DW: "No! In my back garden... on a push bike!"

DBR: Doing tricks?

DW: "Surprisingly no. I'd built some jumps and trails in my back garden and we just used to mess about on them. I invited some friends

round one day and one of the friends brought his younger brother along. His brother also brought a friend over, a real young dude. Not realising how jumps worked the young dude rode between the two peaks of the jumps just as I approached them. I saw him coming and slammed on the binders which pitched me forward and chucked me over the bars. I did a bit of a running man through the air before I face planted into the landing. I broke my teeth, peeled my scalp back and had a compression fracture on my C3 in my neck. So yeah, that put me out for a little bit."

DBR: Ouch!

DW: "I was lucky really because I got the type of fracture that goes up and through rather than the one that severs although I did lose the feeling in my legs at one point. It was weird, I walked to the ambulance but when I got to the hospital I was passing in and out of consciousness so I don't remember too much.

"But I do remember being strapped down on a bed, losing my breath and losing the feeling in my legs. It was such a weird feeling because I'd gone from being a college dude just enjoying life to being a kid struggling to breathe and my legs not working. I couldn't even cry properly because I was in so much pain. It was proper weird. Thankfully I recovered.



"After that incident I just thought you can't wrap yourself up in cotton wool. I've been so lucky from there on out; to fall into freestyle and live the dream with these two [Samson Eaton and Arran Powley] as Team Bolddog. I get to travel the UK and the world with my two best friends – you couldn't make it any better.

"I met my bird on tour as well and she's rad. She gets the whole concept of it all and what I do. I think people wonder if I'm being sarcastic when I walk round saying 'I'm living the dream' and I say it quite a lot! I reckon they think I'm taking the p*ss but I'm not – life is rad!"

DBR: When did you start thinking about throwing tricks on a bike? Before or after the crash?

DW: "It was actually after the crash. I started working for Bolddog just through circumstances really. I met Andy Godbold – who owns Bolddog – in 2005 and he was looking for someone to work in his online store. He already ran an FMX team which he started in 2002 but at that time he wasn't doing many shows – he had started to go down the stunt route more as he is a stuntman. He wanted to keep the team running, so he brought the FMX stuff down to six shows a year which was easy for him to manage.

"Around that time I stepped into the online store just as a dogsbody – inputting data and stuff. Andy said that I could ride the ramps at any time if I wanted to. I'd never hit a ramp before but eventually when I did I quite liked it. Andy went away on a stunt job somewhere and while he was gone I used the ramps almost everyday with Samson.

"When Andy came back I said to him – 'I've learnt a seat grab, I've learnt this and I've learnt that...' He said – 'there's no way you've done all that!" So I showed him. He said that I was good enough to ride in the show so I rode in one that following weekend and I got paid £150. I was like wow I have hit the big time – I'm riding a bike and getting paid for it! It just went from there really. Later on I got the opportunity to run the freestyle team a bit more and we've gone from doing six shows a year to doing 46 shows a year!"

DBR: So you were pretty natural at the freestyle stuff then. Who were your influences?

DW: "On the contrary! Believe it or not I'm not actually a natural freestyle rider – I'm just not naturally gifted at it. I guess I just want it really bad. Take Samson for example, he is naturally gifted at freestyle. He doesn't work out, he doesn't train and he eats whatever he wants... But then he goes out and throws the biggest Kiss of Death in the world! No one does a bigger KOD than Samson.

"I try to but I'm never going to be able to do it

because he is just naturally more gifted and his ability shines through. But I don't mind admitting it – I work hard and that's how I've reached the level that I'm at now. I train hard and my physique is alright."

DBR: Yeah it's 'alright' ...

DW: "I'm not a natural when it comes to riding but I am a fan of freestyle – I love it! Now I get to ride with these awesome people like Edgar Torronteras which is just insane. I remember watching Edgar at Bercy years ago and now I'm riding with him. It's quite humbling really. Obviously both Pastrana and Nate Adams were big influences as well. Unlike those guys I'm definitely not a natural but I'm quite technical and I've always been smooth. When I raced I'd find smooth, efficient lines and that's how it works with my freestyle. I know exactly what I'm grabbing and when I'm grabbing it."

DBR: Exactly! You seem to be very efficient when you're up in the air. Where as with Edgar he always seems to be a bit loose!

DW: "Precisely! And that's awesome to watch from a crowd perspective. Samson for example is way more exciting to watch than me – everyone's always going up to him saying how gnarly he is. But he'll tell you hand on his heart that a one handed look back hart attack is way



gnarlier than a whip that he just throws out like that. I just do it so slow and smooth and it's almost like it doesn't get the credit it deserves from the crowd."

DBR: We interviewed Travis Pastrana recently and he said something very similar to that. He talked about this insane backflip variation section they had in the Nitro show last year. All the riders thought it was the gnarliest thing ever but the crowd just didn't respond. They couldn't tell one backflip variation from another...

DW: "You're so right. I can go out there and do a one handed grab to rock solid. I'll think it was huge and I'll come in and these boys will say how sick it was but it just won't get much reaction from the crowd. Then I can go out and do the easiest trick in the book – which is a Captain Morgan – and I'll hear the crowd go crazy. I'll come in and everyone tells me how rad it is yet it's so easy to do."

DBR: Well perhaps its 'easy' if you're a complete lunatic and like hanging off bikes in mid air!

DW: "Anyone can do it if they want. Crossing the road is dangerous but if you practice enough and get good enough you can do it every day! I'm lucky that I have an awesome training facility to develop my skills. At the end of the day that's what it boils down to."

DBR: It looks like you three have a good craic doing what you're doing as Team Bolddog. Tell us a little about your team-mates...

DW: "Don't get me wrong we have a cool bunch of riders here (at the Monster Energy Arenacross) but when we go away to our generic agricultural shows it is just the three of us – and my dad – and that's what we're used to. We are on the road for weeks at a time and we have little squabbles but nothing major. The whole thing just works great.

"Then you come here and everyone else in the FMX show is kind of an individual and they've all got their own backs whereas with us three we've all got each other's backs. Like if I make myself look a tit than I know one of the other two has got my back. Like last weekend Arran fell off in the corner so I figured I'd fall off as well and we'd both look like tits together!"

Arran Powley: "It was real funny. I jumped the ramp, went into the corner and my front wheel ran over a bit of tarp on a shiny floor. I washed out and slid along on my side and thought 'Dan's going to love this!' Then as I looked over my shoulder I saw Dan do exactly the same thing!"

DBR: Did you do it on purpose?

DW: "No! I saw him do it and thought that it looked a bit stupid. The next thing I know I find myself doing exactly the same thing! We just looked at each other and thought we totally just did that! [laughs] I couldn't get up either as I had gone up a bank and my fingers were stuck between the bars and the clutch so I looked even more stupid. We've genuinely got each other backs like that... safety in numbers I guess! [laughs] Having these two with me means everything. If something changed now it would be really hard."

DBR: So what exactly is your role with Bolddog? Are you the team manager?

DW: "Yeah I guess a team manager or a slack team manager anyway. Some stuff I'm really good at and other stuff I'm not. I can get the events, organise the show, design the ramps and keep things tidy but some things I'm a bit slack at. I'm not the sort of person to make a fuss and say things like 'where's the water in the rider's room' etc. I'm never going to do that – it's just not the person I am. Particularly as a rider also, I don't want to seem arrogant.

"That's somewhere I let these boys down and I'm quite open about it. I don't get the boys looked after quite as well as they deserve to be. When we are on the road I drive the lorry, Ron (Arran) drives the camper and Samson mixes and keeps me awake on the long journeys..."

DBR: So when does your show season start and finish?



DW: "We'll be flat out from the end of April through to early October. Plus we also have the Arenacross in Jan and Feb.

"The agricultural shows are a real surprise. The crowds are just awesome as most of them are completely new to the sport. We don't even have to pull a trick for the crowd to roar – they do it when we are just on our warm up jumps, it's mental!

"We go to shows like the Royal Welsh and its deafening the amount of noise the crowd makes. I think they have around 25,000 people surrounding the arena when we perform and the Welsh love bikes..."

DBR: What about Arenacross? Are you the orchestrator behind all the madness here as well?

DW: "I'm responsible for the ramps and making sure that they are set up properly but I fall into a weird role with Arenacross because I'm not a headline rider but I do like doing tricks such as the Captain Morgan which the big-hitters like Edgar aren't going to do. I also do the LED bike which is for the kids really. I got a bit disheartened with it after last year because it is pretty gnarly to do but the stuff I get on Facebook from mums saying how much their kids love it pumps me up and

makes it all worthwhile."

DBR: So as a percentage how much more dangerous is the LED jump? It seems crazy that you actually jump in the dark...

DW: "I try not to think about it. Last year I thought about it way too much. The lads would go out for food and I would just stay here and dwell on it and recluse myself. I wasn't the greatest of company last year. I was just so frightened of doing the LED jump. Literally every time I was expecting to crash because it is so unknown.

"But coming into this year I was doing the jump four times per show at Motorcycle Live so that gave me more confidence. I haven't crashed yet – touch wood – so I've started feeling a little more confident about it. I decided that I am going to do it and whatever will be, will be.

"I wasn't planning on doing it again this year. I felt obliged to do it last year as Matt Bates had spent quite a bit of money on the bike and he does look after me financially as he sees the extra danger involved. Don't get me wrong it's cool for me because I am getting some extra exposure from it and I'm getting well known for it.

"Coming back to Arenacross again this year I had a whole speech planned saying I wasn't

going to do it again, but when I found myself in Matt's office and he asked me to do it again I just found myself nodding and saying it was no problem! [laughs] I think the game plan for next year is to come up with something badder and better. Matt is very good at coming up with those sort of concepts..."

DBR: Do you flip?

DW: "I do and I don't. I don't do it in the shows right now but yes I can flip. We did talk about flipping the LED bike which I wasn't totally against but I'd want to do it off a super kicker. So that's something we've talked about. Petr Pilat does a tandem backflip and they were looking for the lightest guy to do it with him and guess what... that would have been me stuck on the front of the bike with him! But luckily that one didn't come off."

DBR: On a global scale FMX seems to be evolving rapidly with guys like Tom Pages and Josh Sheehan and things like the triple back flip. Can the same be said for the UK scene?

DW: "To a certain extent, yeah..."

DBR: Samson is shaking his head over there...

DW: "We don't see a huge amount of young riders coming through, so that's a little



disappointing. Although it's not for the want of trying, our team is happy to invest the time and the facility in order to help young riders but they just don't seem to be there. Although here in the UK we do have guys like Squibby [Jamie Squibb] who have ventured into the flip realms. He's got things like a massive KOD flip and seat grab flips nailed yet he is 33/34 years old. Jamie's level of riding has just gone off the scale as he's got older!"

DBR: Is that because he has his own facility?

DW: "Yes, it's definitely an attribute that helps. He has a concrete loop and a resin landing that is going to help once you have got that first flip out of the way. You can then get on it everyday and flips become pretty normal. Don't get me wrong, when I used to flip every day my heart would go on the first one. It's cool to see what Squibby is doing, and it's inspirational for us as we have to step our game up. We are now investing in a winter loop so that will help. Ron flips and Samson has more talent than I have in one eyelash so we'll get him on it."

SE: "I'm not flipping!"

DW: "Yes he will. Peer pressure is a bitch!"

DBR: Where are you guys able to train? There's obviously your compound and Squibby's compound?

DW: "We have ridden down at Squibb's but he is in Exeter so it's a long way away. We have got a great facility but the weather is just savage here and you can't ride on dirt. We do have a winter loop into the foam pit so we could ride the pit but you do 10 jumps into the pit and you're knackered. It takes its toll getting out and you get soaked. You get pretty beat up too as you come to an abrupt stop which doesn't happen when you're landing on a ramp."

DBR: So have you ever been to So Cal or somewhere like it to do training and riding?

DW: "I have had offers but I've never had the minerals to actually do it. That's just me not liking to step outside of my comfort zone really. I like my little bubble and I use the winter time to make improvements to the ramps and the van and get things ready for a busy show season. Edgar does keep trying to get me to go to his but I know I'll get the pressure to do things out of my comfort zone. I thought I was going to be an international superstar back in 2007 as I was doing 75 foot flips before anyone – well, anyone in this country anyway – but that didn't go that well really!"

DBR: Why didn't that go well?

DW: "Well I did 14 good ones into the pit and the boys were like 'you've got this'! So we moved the ramp up the road and I went for it. Anxiety got to me though. I pulled too early which meant the suspension compressed earlier and rebounded earlier so the bike didn't drive out and it stopped! So I chucked the bike away and tried to get away from it. But I didn't manage that, and it drilled me into the ground."

DBR: What were the injuries from that?

DW: "I tore the ACL in my right knee and I was pretty bruised up for a bit. But I had to go and do a flip in a show just one week later! I've had a few like that. There was a time I under rotated at the farm, crashed hard and then had to go to Ireland the next day...brilliant! "The last time I flipped to dirt was the day before the Britain's got Talent final. I was aiming to flip in the show and then I blew my knee out... again, brilliant!"

DBR: Obviously it's not a nice subject but how many injuries have you had from FMX?

DW: "I've blown my knee a few times – until I started squatting and wearing CTIs – CTIs saved my life! I've done my shoulder, scapular, humorous and collar bone. I've also hit my head pretty hard a few times too. I generally land on my head which breaks my fall [laughs]..."

DBR: Has Andy not taught you how to fall properly yet? **DW:** "No, but I'm pretty good at getting hit by a car now! He has taught me that. I'm rad at that to be fair. I got hit by a car nine times in one day once!"

DBR: We've heard you say that you think you have pushed yourself to your limit in FMX. Is that right?

DW: "I think what I should have said is that I feel like I have underachieved in FMX – I'm not a consistent flipper and I'm not throwing big KOD flips although I do probably have the skills to



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do those things. As I said before though I don't really like going out of my comfort zone.

"That is what led me to the fitness side of things. I have a feeling that I can't control certain elements of my freestyle – without having a big input of money you can't build a winter loop and we've had other things that have been required in the business like a new motorhome, interactive stand etc and those things have to come first. So that does limit us to an extent with what we can do with our riding and developing it.

"I'm now 32 and I'm sure when I'm older I'll regret not pushing myself further in freestyle but over the last couple of years my direction has gone a little more towards the fitness side. At first I didn't really know why I was doing it but then it suddenly twigged that I can control what I eat, I can control how many times I go to the gym and I can control how hard I train and I was seeing results. My body composition changed quite drastically and seeing the changes and receiving the comments I suddenly became quite determined and devoted. If I do something I generally give it everything I've got and that's what happened really."

DBR: Obviously you are quite good at the fitness thing. Talk us through what it takes and how you learned what to do...

DW: "It took a while and I learned from a mixture of stuff including videos and just talking to people. I'm essentially two and a half years down the line from when I first started picking up weights. It all stemmed from my fiancé's father who was a body builder.

"We got talking one Christmas and he said he would take me up to the weights room and show me a bit. That suited me perfectly as I'm quite self-conscious and going to a gym at the time wasn't really me – I wouldn't have known what I was doing! Emily's dad put a rough programme together for me so I had the confidence to go to the gym.

"All of a sudden I started to see the changes and I just got the pump from being at the gym. I thought it was pretty cool. Then I started getting up at 5.30am every day and got into a cool regime. It sounds horrendous to a lot of people –

Dan's fitness helps loads when he's riding the heavy LED-laden bike

getting up at 5.30 when it's dark and quiet – but I like it and by 9am I've already done three hours.

"My energy levels went up and it became a bit of a natural snowball – I really got into it. I got hooked and over the last two and a half years I've learned so much.

"I paid for a trainer and a program. You look at people on Instagram that you admire and want to look like. You learn a lot about them and how their photos are edited or taken on a peak week. Man, there's so much you can learn. But now I have pretty much gained the knowledge for what works for my body and what I need to do."

DBR: A lot of racers that read DBR will want to get fitter than their competition. Have you got any tips?

DW: "Get a good trainer! I can't tell you how much of an advantage it is being fit and in shape – it's unreal..."

DBR: So this helps you with FMX?
DW: "Without a doubt. FMX isn't really a strength discipline or one that you need good cardio fitness but when I'm flying out to India or somewhere to do a film job and they want me to jump 22 metres over a speeding train, I'm sitting on that bike knowing I have done the work and that I'm physically strong. That puts my mind in a superior place to what it would be if I was unfit. I've built my body ready to do this sh't so when I'm sitting on a haggard old RM-Z 250 that's not running all that well and they cue me to go and I've got to boost it over a locomotive... I'll take every little advantage that fitness gives me."

DBR: So wait a minute? You've done stunt work? What film was that in?

DW: "That was a film called Hero. It's a Bollywood film that was just recently released and actually won some awards. I got really lucky – Andy didn't want to go away for two and a half months so I flew out instead. I worked on a film called Jai Ho with an actor called Salman Khan – he turned out to be like the Tom Cruise of Bollywood! He's like the biggest actor in Bollywood ever – he is huge! I didn't know that and I only realised when I went to meet him at

his house and there were 3,000 people waiting outside to get a glimpse of him!"

DBR: So you were his stunt double?
DW: "Exactly! I've got some weird photos.
They put dots all over my face for the face replacement CGI but essentially I doubled him.
There were loads and loads of bikes in the movie >>





and I got to do all of that. The film was released and did amazing because Salman was in it. I was in the credits and then the calls started coming in. I went back to do a TV advert and then the second film 'Hero'."

DBR: Seeing you walk about the pits and talking to you now you wouldn't think that you were rad on a bike or cut like you are. When you do take off the shirt do you like surprising people? And is it the same thing when you hit the ramp? DW: "I've been doing the freestyle thing for so long and I'm lucky that I'm good enough to ride at events like this. But the fitness thing is more recent and it gets such mixed reactions. I get some people who say 'man you're so ripped' and they just want advice and I like helping people but some people in the fitness industry don't like it when I freely help people and give them advice.

"On the other hand I have had quite a bit of negativity from it too. My fiancé' is right, she explained to me that most people don't look like I do, so an easy reaction from some people is to put you down. So I have had it both ways. I am not doing it to impress other people - I'm doing it for myself and to feel good about it."

DBR: It must feel pretty damn good to walk down the beach on holiday with your shirt off though. DW: "I went on holiday with Emily and I'd leaned out a bit before we went. I can't believe I'm saying stuff like this, but I'm walking down the street with my shirt off and this dude said 'holy shit, how have you got like that?'. That sparked a conversation and he was absorbing everything that I said. That's just cool... also I feel a bit better about how hot my bird is! People used to look at me funny. Especially when freestyle wasn't

involved, I could feel people thinking why the hell is she with him? Honestly, I could feel it! But now I just laugh and think it's because I'm ripped dude!"

DBR: Can anybody do it?

DW: "Yes, anybody can do it. Diet is key but it's got to be sustainable. It's a life changing thing. If you can't see yourself doing it in a year's time than it won't happen. Having a good trainer or someone like me who has done it and can give you tips will accelerate things too."

DBR: What's next for Dan Whitby? DW: "I've recently just had another call about going out to India which is fine by me. If I can get a little niche doing Bollywood films, it works for me."









DBR: What about Hollywood? You have to have a license to be a full-on stunt man don't you? **DW:** "You have to be part of the stunt register and do six disciplines to a certain standard."

DBR: Are you interested in that?

DW: Not really. I wouldn't be able to be good at six things! Also, being alright in six disciplines creates a generic stuntman and that's cool and I totally respect it. But for me, I go as a specialist. I've picked one discipline that I am good at. So I only do stunts that involve jumping bikes. For example I wouldn't get on a horse for all the money in the world..."

DBR: So what's it like working with the Tom Cruise of Bollywood?

DW: "It was weird at first. I was a bit anxious. Every billboard you pass has a massive picture

of him and there are thousands of people waiting for him everywhere you go. But I got chatting with him and he was a really down to earth guy. I tell him like it is. For example he'd ask what I thought of a certain shot and I'd tell him it was sh*t if I thought it was sh*t.

"Everyone was like 'ooooh, he just said it was sh't to Salman Khan!' but he was just like 'yeah, you're right. We are doing it again!'. I think he liked the fact that I was like that. He is like a god out there so people around him don't usually talk to him like that. Eventually I stopped having meals in my trailer and ate with him instead. We had two weeks off, I went to his place and we rode quads through the jungle. It was unreal."

DBR: As well as rubbing shoulders with Bollywood superstars you were recently on Britain's got Talent. How was that? DW: "That was cool as well. There was a lot of hanging around involved but that was to be expected. It was really cool, quite a contrast from being out in India. I loved being part of it."

DBR: So are you signing more autographs now? **DW:** "We get a lot of questions about it on the stand, like 'how is Simon Cowell?"

DBR: So how is Simon Cowell?
DW: "He was cool. He smelt amazing, didn't he
Ron? He was the only one of the three that came
down and said you guys are awesome, you're
risking your lives for the show and I respect
that. He was really, really nice. To get it out
on mainstream TV was cool and it came
across well."

loneers The guys who were the first to be first... Words and photos by Jack Burnicle



























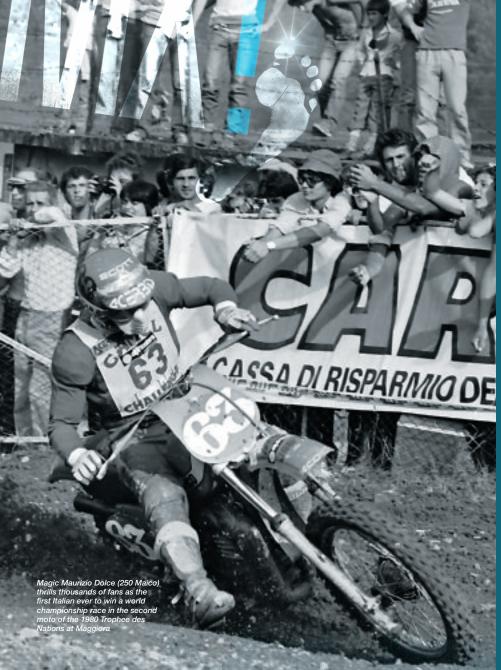
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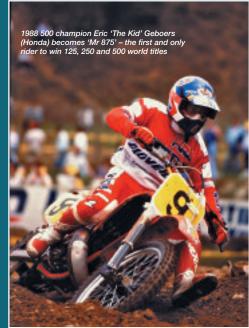
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he late Jim Pomeroy always referred to himself as 'The First American' because he was the first Yank to win a motocross grand prix - at Sabadell, in Spain, in 1973.

Every sport is littered with 'firsts' and motocross is no exception. 'Bimbo' was also, 18 months later, a member of the first US country. His team-mates were 'Jammin' Jimmy Weinert, Marty Tripes (winner of the first 'Superbowl of Motocross' in Los Angeles in 1972!) and Brad Lackey.

Bearded 'Bad Brad' would, of course, claim Suzuki in 1982, seven days before Danny LaPorte captured the 250 world crown. A year earlier Danny had been a member of the first American squad to wrest the Motocross des Nations from the Europeans alongside Honda US team-mates Johnny O'Mara, Donnie Hansen and Chuck Sun.

I guess the original first has to be the winner of the inaugural 500cc motocross world championship in 1957, Swede Bill Nilsson, mounted on a British AJS! Five years later, after dashing Englishman Dave Bickers had

twice been European 250 king that series also evolved into an official world series

It proved too late for the perennially popular Bickers because Greeves withdrew him from international competition, though Dave won his home grand prix that 1962 season as a 250cc world champion was another Swede, Husqvarna-mounted Torsten Hallman.

Britain's first world champion was rugged though his brother-in-law Johnny Draper and Les Archer had been the last European champions before the series was elevated to world status in 1957.

And after Smith's second success in 1965 it would be 14 years before we hailed another English triumph when mercurial Hampshireman Graham 'Rolls' Noyce became Honda's first world MX champ in 1979. Honda's maiden grand prix victory had been secured by their original factory rider, US-exiled Dutchman Pierre Karsmakers, in the first ever Canadian GP at St Gabriel in 1975.

Perhaps surprisingly 'Big Red' was the last Japanese manufacturer to taste GP glory. The trailblazer was Suzuki, who entered the world championship fray in 1969. Both Sylvain Geboers and his team-mate, world champion

Joel Robert, won in 1970 for the Hammamatsu in the British round at Dodington Park and Geboers in the last ever East German 250GP to

At season's end the truly spectacular Robert, who always took a final drag on his mechanic's cigarette immediately before the start of a race, became the first world champion crowned on a Japanese motorcycle!

Hakan Andersson hoisted Yamaha into the GP winner's circle in Sweden in 1972 and went on to claim their first world title the following year. Then in 1974 his fellow Swede, burly blonde bombshell Torleif 'Cassius' Hansen, catapulted Kawasaki to the top of the rostrum in the Portsmouth club's British 250GP at Ladies' Mile, Chalton. But it would be 21 years before Kawasaki belatedly became world champions themselves, Stefan Everts and his Jan de Groot-tuned KX250 eventually doing the deed in 1995..

France, currently fronted by the remarkable Romain Febvre, has for so long been at the realise how uncompetitive French riders were until the 1970s. In fact their first unlikely grand black curly hair called Daniel Pean, who won >>



the Yugoslavian 250GP at Karvolac on a Maico in 1974. It would be another five seasons before Jean-Jacques Bruno (KTM) became their first 500cc winner at Beuern, in Germany, in 1979!

Equally Italy, that other hothouse of modern day motocross, took many years to feature at the front of grand prix racing. Their first individual international victory was aptly achieved by spectacular wild child Maurizio Dolce (250 Maico), who won the second moto of the Trophee des Nations in front of a deafening packed house at Maggiora in 1980.

Six months later Michele Rinaldi, on a factory Gilera, won the opening round of the 1981 125 world championship at Lovola and Italy was on its way, Guiseppe Andreani winning round four at Goldbach, in Germany, to record the first ever 125GP success for KTM!

But the Italians were the first of these great MX nations to capture a global title. The 125cc world championship had been launched in 1975 and was won by a tiny, spirited Belgian named Gaston Rahier, on a Suzuki.

The RM125 in fact dominated for a decade,

its 10th successive title won in 1984 at a darkly dramatic Luxembourg finale when clear championship leader Corrado Maddii, on a Cagiva, broke his leg in a freak practice collision and his friend and rival Rinaldi (Suzuki) seized the crown by three points...

Two years later Jacky Vimond became the first Frenchman to savour world championship success on his YZ250 Yamaha. Since when, of course, amazing athletes like Bayle, Puzar, Tortelli, Chiodi, Pichon, Musquin and Cairoli have established a glorious tradition of Franco-Italian champions.

Equally dominant, until their shock dethronement in 2015, has been the Austrian manufacturer KTM, consistent title winners against the might of the Japanese Big Four. But their first world championship success dates back fully 40 years to another dark day in the sport's history when immensely popular Czech star Jaroslav Falta (CZ) had already been crowned 250cc champ at the final round before the Russian KTM team lodged a protest,

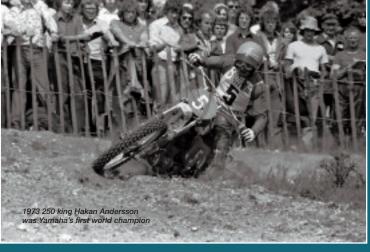
claiming he had jumped the start. The FIM, under severe Russian pressure, dubiously hit Falta with a one minute penalty and Gennady Moiseev, on a Katoom, procured a controversia crown by six points, though he would go on to genuinely trounce the opposition in 1977 and '78

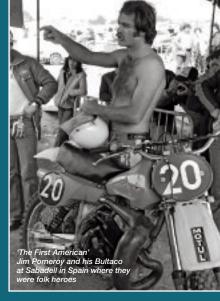
Russia's first world champion had been the smiling assassin Victor Arbekov, on a CZ, in 1965, but Czechoslovakia – now the Czech Republic – has never again come close to emulating Falta's near miss, though Jiri Churavy finished a distant second to Rahier in that inaugural 125 world series a year later.

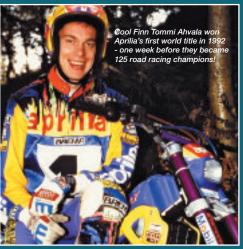
Another nation that has established a modern pedigree in European motocross is South Africa, whose first world champion, in 1992, was 125 king Greg Albertyn on a Jan de Groot Honda.

There are lots of other 'firsts' it's fun to mention. The first European winner of a USGP was German Willi Bauer (Maico), who conquered the first 500cc grand prix at



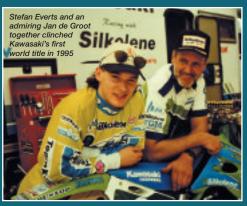




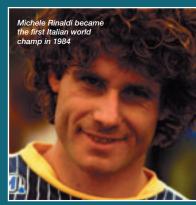












Carlsbad Raceway, Southern California, in 1973. The first European to win a US250GP, at Unadilla, upstate New York in 1981 was Englishman Neil Hudson (Yamaha).

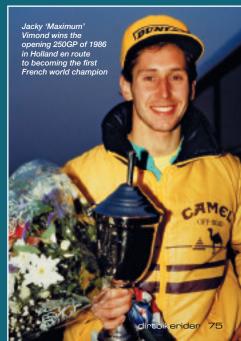
And it was a European who became the first and only winner of three US national titles in the same year, when their season comprised supercross and the 250 and 500cc outdoor nationals. Ricky 'Too Hip' Johnson twice came close, missing out in 1987 when, despite seven main event victories he lost the supercross crown to Jeff Ward and cruelly, again, in 1988, losing the 250 nationals by a meagre seven points, again to Ward. Three years later Jean-Michel Bayle brilliantly trounced the Yanks, to the universal fury of their fans and seized their coveted triple crown in 1901.

A year later Finnish trials star Tommi Ahvala toppled Jordi Tarres to clinch Aprilia's first ever world championship in any discipline – one week before Alessandro Gramigni, on a 125, won their first road racing title! But the Italian manufacturer's maiden grand prix motocross

winner was former KTM star 'Beppe' Andreani, who won the Austrian 125GP at Launsdorf in 1984. Beppe also took his works Aprilia to victory a year later in San Marino and remains the company's only ever MX GP winner.

A fabled European triple crown also existed back in those halcyon days when we had 125, 250 and 500cc world championships. Stylish Dutch ace Kees van der Ven (KTM) became the first man to win a grand prix in each category when, already a multiple vainquer in 125 and 250cc series, he triumphed at Vimmerby in the 1986 Swedish 500cc round. Two years later Eric 'The Kid' Geboers became 'Mr 875'; 125 world champion in 1982 and '83, 250cc world champ in 1987 and finally, at Namur, crowned 500 world champion in 1988!

That day also witnessed the most emotive and universally acclaimed first of all when Hakan Carlqvist pulled up his private Kawasaki at the Monument Café and swigged a beer en route to a crushing victory. Not a 'first' ever likely to be repeated but one that would surely have appealed to Joel Robert!





The AMA has EnduroCross while the FIM equivalent is SuperEnduro but which one is better? There's only one way to find out...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media





s an overall package the sport of enduro is pretty diverse. That's not always been the case though and it used to be that timecard enduro was king. In more recent times the sport has evolved and branched out - it's not just all about timecards and special tests anymore. It's become so much more with extreme enduro and cross country races heck, it's even moved indoors.

Going indoors to form what we know now as endurocross, indoor enduro has become a breakaway sport of its own. Still relatively young, it's only been around 10 years endurocross as a sport is catching the attention of the masses for its explosive races, non-stop action and the added attraction of being easily accessible to the casual motorsport punter.

Housed in a stadium, endurocross as a sport, is enduro's answer to motocross' supercross and arenacross. Growing fast on both sides of the Atlantic, the AMA's series EnduroCross and the FIM's series SuperEnduro is arguably the best they've ever been in terms of talented riders. Currently in full swing, the SuperEnduro World Championship's level of competition is at an all-time high.

With America's Cody Webb, Colton Haaker, Taylor Robert and Ty Tremaine all committing to the entire seven round series plus regulars Taddy Blazusiak, Jonny Walker, Alfredo Gomez and Mario Roman in the mix, the action has been literally been edge of your seat stuff. With countless lead changes and crashes, numerous winners and the belief in the top six guys that

they can win on any given day, nothing is being left on the table.

Europe versus America, SuperEnduro versus EnduroCross, the on track rivalry is, well, super intense. As of round three, it's Europe in the driving seat with Walker holding the point's lead. But the USA are right in the hunt with Cody Webb and Colton Haaker rounding out the top three. Whether Walker can go on and win his debut world title or if Webb or Haaker become the first American to win a SuperEnduro title remains to be seen.

Catching up with the top six guys of the SuperEnduro series, it was time to find out what's better - EnduroCross or SuperEnduro and how they see the sport evolving during the next five years...



"EnduroCross in the States has evolved a lot. In the beginning it was more like some one-off events that any off road rider could try. Things have changed and now it's a specialised sport by itself. You kind of have to be an endurocross guy if you want to be near the top. It's really difficult to be a little bit of everything and still be near the top in endurocross. It's become its own niche and the level of the riding just keeps improving year after year.

Both EnduroCross and SuperEnduro I believe will continue as specialised sports and the riders will keep pushing the level. It's almost scary to imagine where the level of riding will go in the next few years.

"When the tracks deteriorate and you have to jump logs it's going to be tough. It's not the same as in Supercross, where you might have to jump a triple in the dirt. In EnduroCross or SuperEnduro the dirt is falling apart and we've got a log on top of a jump. The consequences of any crash might be bad.

"Another difference between EnduroCross and SuperEnduro is that in the States we have more manufacturers involved in the championship. I used to ride for Beta and won a title for them. It's not the same in SuperEnduro where KTM and Husqvarna are the dominant forces. I think this goes down to how expensive it is to travel and race around the world.

"The FIM insist on making SuperEnduro a global series and that costs a lot of money private teams aren't able to afford. KTM and Husqvarna offer an incredible amount of support to any kind of rider and they are the teams everyone wants to be on. In the States it's a lot easier for anyone to go buy a bike from a dealer and go do the championship. America is huge but it's kind of one central location so you don't have to travel as much as in SuperEnduro.

"In the States manufacturers also have a better contingency program, paying out some good money to guys winning events. They offer like a 2,000 dollar travel bonus. It gives racers a greater incentive to do the travelling and contest the series."







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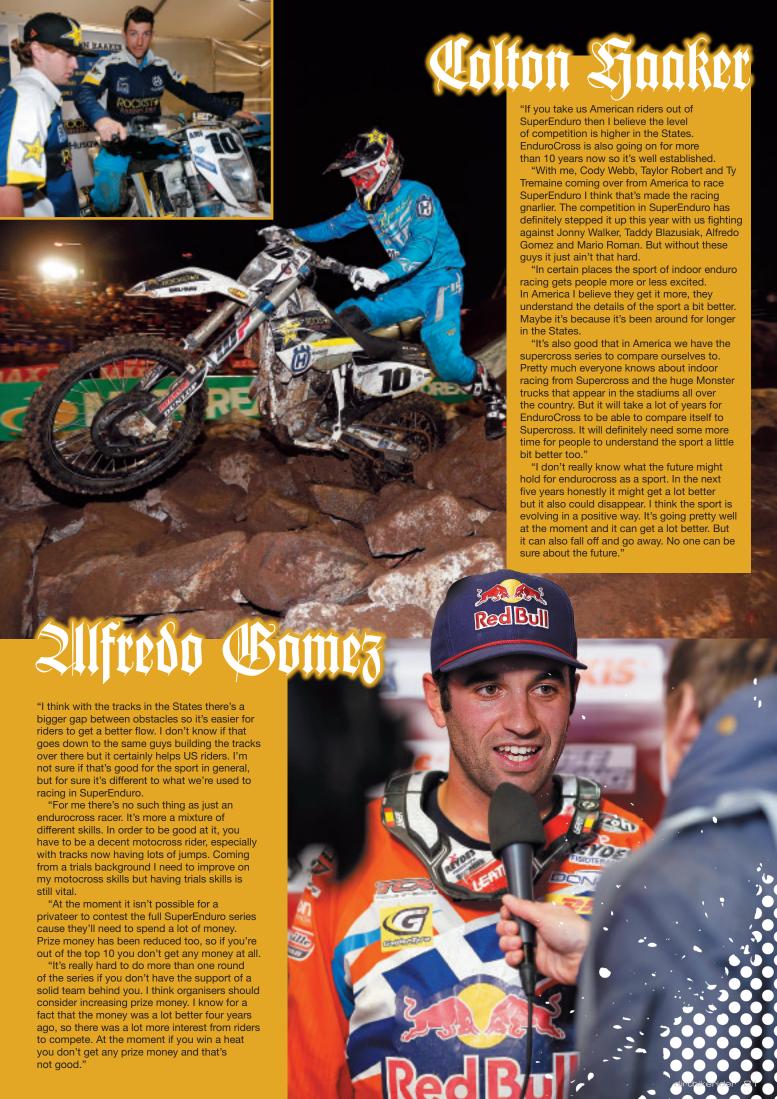
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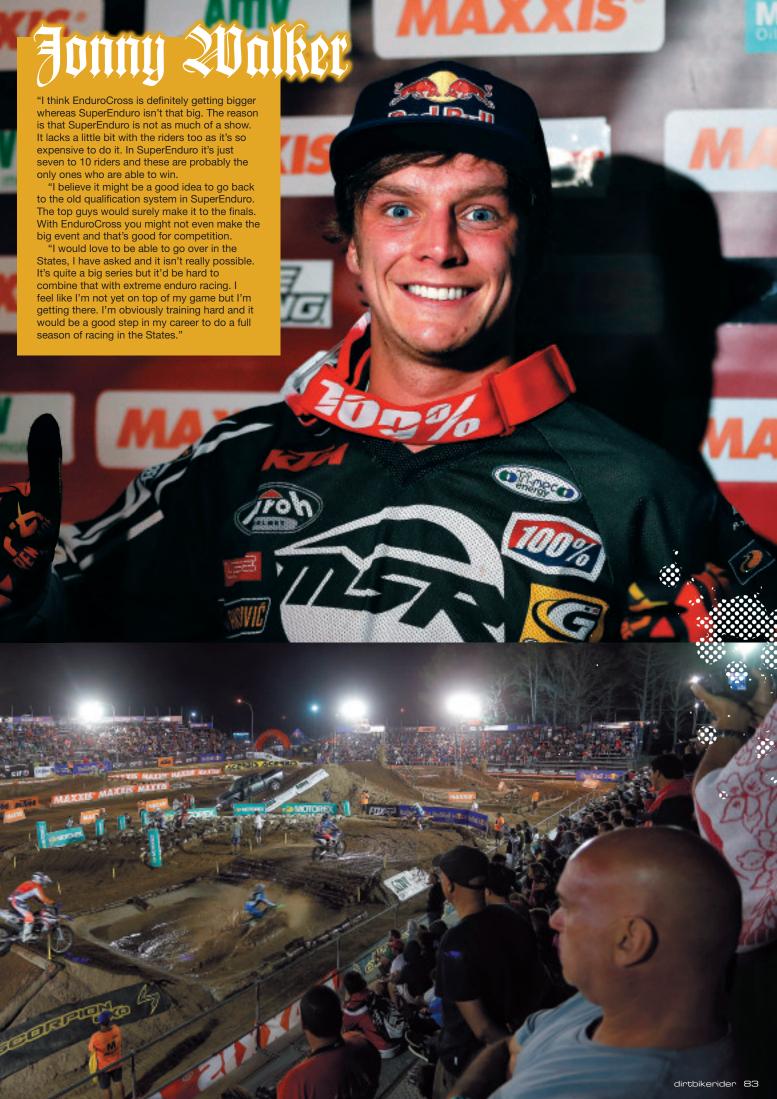
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RAVIS PASTRANA

TRAVIS PASTRANA TALKS EXCLUSIVELY TO DER ABOUT HIS CRAZY LIFE UNDER THE NITRO CIRCUS BIG TOP, GIVING UP RACING FOR A CAREER IN FREESTYLE, THE PHENOM THAT IS R WILLY AND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO CRAP YOUR PANTS IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE... Words by Max Hind Photos by Hank Hill and TooFast Media







worst experience of my life. I actually ended up crapping myself! I pulled into the pits on the first stop and said 'I'm done' and they said 'you're in second place' and I instantly said 'fill it up – let's get going!'. It was pretty funny..."

DBR: How excited are you bringing the Nitro Circus show back to the UK?

TP: "It's awesome – we really enjoy coming over here. The crowd is always good and the O2 sold out on the first night so they opened up another night for us. That's the first place in Europe we have been able to do more than

"I feel that Europe has a really good core motocross group but they don't really have a big action sports following. We can go to New Zealand and Australia and get four shows in the same stadium and sell them all out! That's great because you get to stay in each city a little longer and experience the culture a bit more. So it will be great to stay in London for more than one day."

DBR: Was this the ultimate goal when you

started on this Nitro adventure all those years ago? Has it passed your wildest dreams with the TV shows, DVDs, 3D movie and now a global tour? I mean, it's kind of got out of hand since the days of just playing in your back yard hasn't it?

TP: "Its funny, to this day the most fun I have is playing in the back yard. But now the levels are just a little different. Only two months ago at my house we had Josh Sheehan going almost 100 feet in the air and doing a triple backflip on a dirt bike! When people come round and see the ramp in real life they're like 'he didn't hit THAT did he?'. It's mind blowingly big – it's 10 stories high! It's just ridiculous.

"Then two days after that Jed Mildon did a quadruple back flip on a BMX bike! And two weeks after that R Willy did a triple front flip on a bicycle. That same day another guy, Brandon Schmidt – a snowboarder – landed a triple backflip on a BMX, and he's a snowboarder! I think he was only the third person ever to land one. So it's just cool to see this type of progress on a daily basis. And it's cool to have all this stuff at my house that inspires creativity."

DBR: It seems to us that in the last couple of years you've gone from the guy doing the new insane tricks like the TP roll and the double flips to the guy who is encouraging his friends to do this crazy stuff that breaks the laws of physics. You've almost become the ultimate enabler, the king of peer pressure. Is that the future for you, inspiring guys like Ryan Williams and Jed Mildon?

TP: "I think it's less inspiring those guys. I think the seeds are already planted. Everyone who is on top of any sport wants to go bigger and do more. The problem is safety. I mean Josh Sheehan at the time was like, I need to go 105 to 110 feet to do the triple backflip and I was like 'okay let's work on the ramp so we can get more pop'. We went through 15 renditions of the take off and then we started working with the bag guys on the landings.

"Now we have a bag that you can have at an angle on a ramp not just flat on the ground. That way he could hit exactly the same mark time after time and then eventually we could take the bag away. It was cool to be able to help him do that. I was trying for four years



but I wasn't strong enough or good enough.

"He works really hard – he welded his own ramps and paid his own money and when everybody gave up on it he said 'no way, we've been working on this for too long!'. Its cool to see the guys that are that determined to do it. People were speculating that he was paid a lot to do it but it wasn't like that at all. He paid for his own flights, he used his own money to build the ramps and I put money in as well.

"My goal is to help action sports grow.

X Games for example is an amazing and a huge platform but the ramps haven't evolved at all.

They are the same as 15 years ago. My goal is to keep improving things so it is 'free' and it is 'style'. That way we can be passionate like an artist and work on a different canvas."

DBR: Could we ever see a triple backflip in the live show?

TP: "Well there are no roofs high enough, so we could only do it in an open top stadium. That's where the Nitro Circus World Games come in. We're starting our own world championship, the first one that's truly open and we're doing it in an open top stadium.

"X Games is awesome but sometimes – due to the politics – some great riders don't get invited. And a lot of the times some names that are just well known names do get invited. I was always one of the guys that got invited because of the name and I appreciated it but with our games we're going to try and open it up and make it fairer.

"We'll try and have these training facilities where athletes can come and practice – by doing that everyone has a fair opportunity. It's almost unfair for the guys that aren't on tour with Nitro circus. The Nitro crew are the best in the world and they are always pushing each other so how do you get to that same level without the same landings and the same take-offs and that same camaraderie that we have on tour?"

DBR: One of our favourite Travis Pastrana moments in the past few years has to be you riding the 'RMzilla' at Red Bull Straight Rhythm. I know you're riding a two-stroke in the Nitro tour so what is it about them that you love?

TP: "Honestly, at first I just couldn't start the four-strokes. I hated kicking them over and over. I also always overheated them when I was on hill climbs or in Florida. It was a nightmare for me. The four-strokes are getting significantly better but I went out and I bought pretty much every two-stroke Suzuki had left.

"I've got RM 250s, RM 125s my shop is pretty much full with them and I said, 'you know what, I'm going to keep mixing fuel, I love the way it smells, I know how it works, I don't need more power'.

"Then when I said that was doing Straight Rhythm people laughed at me and said 'now you've got to go four-stroke' but I said 'don't >>>





worry I'll still have the most powerful bike out here'. I just got a CR 500 from 1993 and put it in a RM-Z 450 frame."

DBR: And back flipped it...

TP: "Yes sir! When that thing got on the whoops dude... braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa... I was like holy crap!"

DBR: We remember the manual...
TP: "I wasn't trying to manual it – it just got up and went!"

DBR: So if you had any tips for an up and coming young FMX rider what would you say to them?

TP: "Oh man, if you're passionate enough about it you'll find a way. A lot of people say to me 'if I had a foam pit I would be as good as you guys or if I had a foam pit I could do this or that' but no one that I know who is on top of their sport had a foam pit when they were growing up.

"Josh Sheehan built his own ramp and took it out to the desert. I'm not recommending this I'm just saying. We had a mulch pile. I must have done 10,000 flips in the mulch pile on a BMX, then on a mountain bike, then a pit bike.

"I do recommend if you can find a foam pit or

an airbag it's safer. You can learn pretty much everything there is to learn just by practising. Josh Sheehan is on tour pretty much all year round and so is Clinton Moore and they don't get chance to go in a foam pit at all really. But they are always learning all the best tricks and battling for the world championship.

"It's like R Willy – he's the best action sports rider I've ever seen in my life! He started out on scooters now he's in BMX as well! He does a nothing bike flip. He does a backflip bike flip... so he does a back flip and the bike does a front flip and he does a body varial while the bike does a front flip!"

DBR: Is it at all annoying that he is just that talented?

TP: "He makes really good people feel completely inadequate! The thing is with R Willy is that he films all of his own stunts. He'll have Schmidty or Kurtis Downs or Gavin Godfrey filming and he'll edit all of his own stuff. He's the last one signing autographs. He gets it, he understands what it's going to take to be a 'name' in the sport now.

"He still gets a little criticism that he's a scooter rider but he is doing things that nobody else even thought was possible. He tried to do a world first at every single show this year and

he got seven out of 23. That's almost one out of three shows. There are amazing riders that have never done anything first, there are X Games champions that have never got a world's first and he gets seven in a month – that's impressive!"

DBR: You started as a motocross racer and a lot of your fans are motocross racers but will we ever see you back on a track racing?

TP: "I love riding motorcycles and I was super competitive. Everyone says I should have stuck to racing and I do agree but by the time you get good enough to do what you love for a living, you no longer love what you do. It's not that I didn't love motocross racing but I had so many injuries...

"I wasn't the kind of rider that could look at a championship and say I'll take a fifth, or third's good enough tonight or a second is good enough tonight. I was that guy that wanted to win. I hate it when people get on the podium and say I could have won but I laid up for the championship. What the hell is that about? I was a kid once, I was a fan once. I wanted to watch my heroes give their all. Who wants to go and see their favourite rider for him to say he 'laid it up?'.

"However that wasn't a great philosophy for



lot of kids. You just seemed to love riding your

TP: "It's an awesome sport. That's what I like so much about racing – it is just so tough. Anyone that is out there racing at the highest level has put in so much work to get there and trains so hard to stay there. I don't care what it looks like or what people say, racers are animals, they are machines! It's by far the gnarliest sport in the world and that's why it's so cool...

DBR: Do you ever regret not sticking to racing? TP: "Motocross racing was what I wanted to do from the age of four. I didn't think about freestyle because freestyle was just a hobby. But as it turned out I was better at showing off than I was at going fast!

"Of course I would've loved to have fulfilled those childhood dreams of being a supercross champion and an outdoor champion in the big classes but at the end of the day I didn't have a lot of friends when I raced. I would have

was kind of an asshole! But he is the Greatest Of All Time and that's what you have to be to be the greatest. I wasn't willing to go there and that's why I'm a freestyler ... "

Without doubt the greatest Travis Pastrana moment for DBR has to be the double flip. Is that the pinnacle of your career? Or is there something else that tops it for you?

TP: "For me the double back flip at X Games was the first and maybe the only time that I felt everybody in the world was watching. I felt everyone understood the danger and what I was going through. When I landed it everyone in the stadium felt what I felt. As an athlete that is something that most will never be able to experience. Was it my greatest moment as an athlete? No. Was it the toughest trick I have ever done? No. But as a moment there is nothing that tops the energy that was in that arena. It was probably the greatest moment of my life."

with him on buses. You don't want someone with ADHD on a bus! He farts a lot too!'

DBR: Most competitive?

: "A toss up between myself and R Willy."

DBR: Most talented? TP: "R Willy for sure."

DBR: Best city? TP: "Best sissy?"

DBR: No, city!

TP: "Haha! Good! A few names came up for sissy but I don't want you to get me into trouble! Best city, for me its Rotorua in New Zealand. They have got really good fans for Nitro and they have white water rafting, luges - we all nearly died on these luges - and Jet Boats. They're so much fun. And the best thing is the maximum anyone can sue you for in NZ is \$10,000 dollars so if you're like 'I want to ride your land' they are like 'yeah go for it' so you can get away with a lot there."

TOOFAST MAX'S

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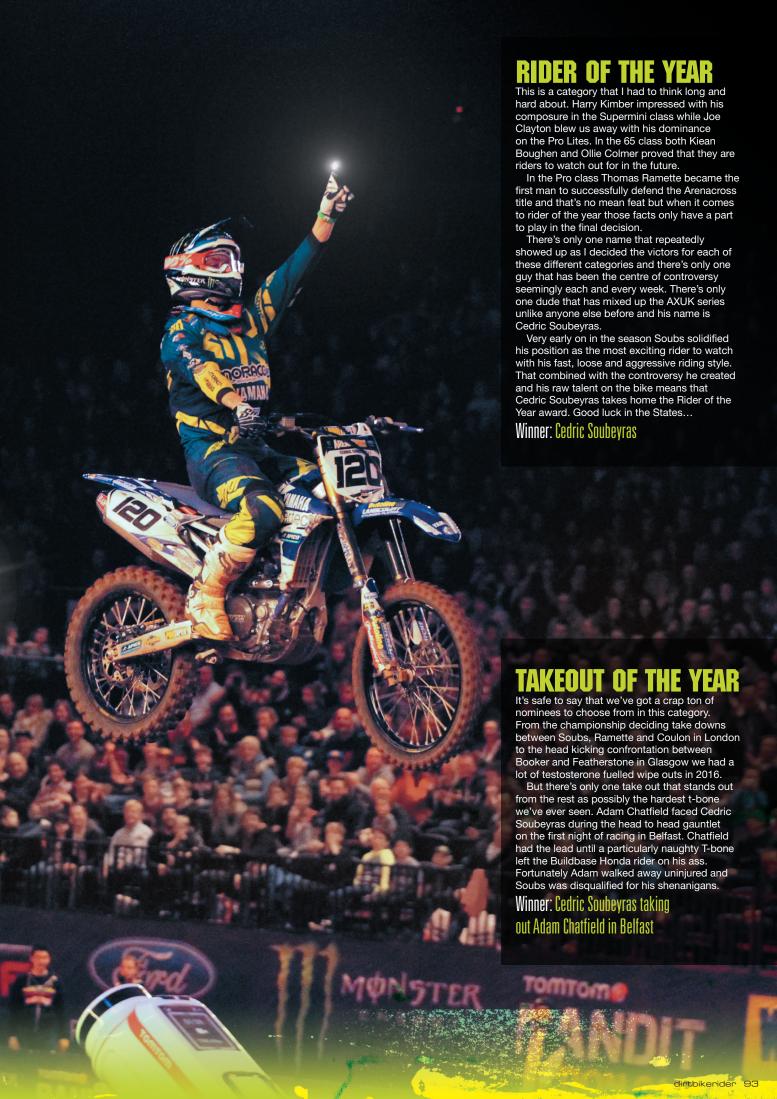
The good, the bad and the ugly from the Monster Energy Arenacross Tour according to our man in the midst . . .

he 2016 Monster Energy Arenacross Tour powered by Ford Ranger has been special for a million and one reasons and since the gate dropped for round one in Manchester we've witnessed thrills, spills and hospital bills as some of the world's fastest indoor racers have battled it out inside the best of British arenas.

While it's now all over for another year and the champions have been crowned we figured it'd be fun to dish out some unofficial awards judged by our man on tour Max Hind aka Johnny Floppy Hair.

Max and his old man Phil have followed the tour from the off and were perfectly

Max and his old man Phil have followed the tour from the off and were perfectly poised at all 11 rounds to capture the action you can watch online over at www.dirtbikerider.com. Since they've been so close to the action week-in week-out we figured there'd be nobody better to have the final say. So without further ado here we go with TooFast Max's Arenacross Awards...









ST-BUAYEY/INX













2016 - some were clean, many were not but only one pass was the catalyst of the craziest, most controversial Arenacross final in the history of ever. The Pro class championship boiled down to a final race duel between Thomas Ramette and Cedric Soubeyras. Ramette led the way until Soubeyras fired his secret weapon and

putting in a hard block pass on Soubs which put the #120 Yamaha over the berm. This was the start of what will go down as #WembleyGate. This is the pass that put Soubeyras in the cross hairs of Coulon, this is the pass that led to Soubeyras trying to take down Ramette, this is the pass that caused Matt Bates a whole load of headaches, this is the pass that won the war. This is the pass of the year!

Winner: Thomas Ramette





SURPRISE OF THE YEAR

The surprise of the 2016 season had to come from Matt Bayliss. No one was expecting the young Brit to turn up in Manchester and put on a show like he did. The electric rides from the youngster really gave the local crowds something to cheer about through the early part of the season. Bayliss cooled off a little through the middle part of the tour but the Wooldridge Demolition rider finished off with a strong ride in London. Bayliss will most certainly be on everyone's radar next time around.

Winner: Matt Bayliss

Honourable mention: Kacey Hird.

I for one didn't expect anyone in the Supermini class to challenge the reigning champ Harry Kimber, let alone a young kid just jumping up onto a big wheeled machine! Hird did just that and earned some new fans along the way as he consistently launched the big finish line double on his Team Green Kawasaki.



CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

Boughen, Kimber, Clayton, Ramette are our four AXUK champions for 2016. Each champion fought off a host of hungry pretenders in order to lift their respective crown but there can only be one Champion of Champions. Only one of these four racers displayed dominance unlike any other. Joe Clayton claimed 20 race wins from a total of 22 races. That is insane! For that awesome near perfect feat alone I hereby crown Joe Clayton the Champion of Champions.

Winner: Joe Clayton

FMX RIDER OF THE YEAR

The Monster Energy Arenacross tour boasts some of the best FMX talent on the planet. From Edgar Torronteras' signature no footed whip to Jamie Squibb's newly formed arsenal of backflip variations these boys most certainly know how to get a crowd pumped. But there's only one man that literally faced his greatest fear each and every weekend in order to put on the best show possible for the AXUK fans. Dan Whitby donned the LED Tron suit at every single round of the 2016 tour and leaped 70ft through complete darkness despite being completely uncomfortable with the entire stunt. Dan you're an FMX god...

Winner: Dan Whitby

Honourable mention: Arran Powley

Powley's cliff hanger to no hander lander in Sheffield was – to quote Christian Stevenson – so sick it nearly gave me bird flu and he did it twice in order to claim victory in the best trick contest.





THE

TRAVELLING MAN!

THE SECOND PART OF THE CHRIS HORSFIELD STORY KICKS OFF WITH A MOVE TO EASTERN EUROPEAN MACHINERY...

Words by Andy Westlake

was one of the best 500cc riders of his era, a talent not unnoticed in Czechoslovakia and CZ who signed him after the collapse of AMC in 1965. "At that time I was racing most of the year in Belgium and based in Brussels where I'd become good friends with Joel Robert and Roger De Coster. I'd met Robert when he first came to England as an up and coming 18 year old and even then you could see he was an incredibly talented rider and a champion

here was no doubt that Chris Horsfield

"I'd given the bikes back to Matchless so Joel suggested I went with him to the works at Strakonice to try for a factory CZ. I tested the bikes and then had to go before a committee of 12 including the 'main man' Mr Jarrolim. Despite having the gears on the 'wrong side' the bikes were fantastic with a broad spread of power compared to the old Matchless so light they felt more like a high speed push bike.

in the making.

"Jarrolim, who always took pride in being called Mister knew all about my successes in the TV trophy and immediately offered me two bikes – a 250 and 500 plus mechanic and spares for the rest of the series.

"They duly arrived in the UK although the first time I saw or sat on them was before practice at the TV scramble at Builth Wells. I took to them immediately and managed to finish second in both the 250 and 500cc races."

On the potent twin port 360cc CZ Chris was capable of taking on and beating almost anyone and the name of Horsfield was being touted as a possible world championship contender. As history would record there were numerous other TV trophy and British championship wins but in the GPs a lack of that all-important consistency and reliability just eluded him.

Smith had retained his crown in '65 but in 1966 the quartet of CZ mounted Friedrichs, Tibblin, Horsfield and Bickers were a season long thorn

in the BSA man's side. Smith was very quick and perhaps unlucky not to make it a hat trick but after a long hard season East German Friedrichs eventually took the title while Chris was left very frustrated.

"The 360cc CZ was a fantastic machine to ride but in those days the GP was decided over two legs and there were numerous times where after doing well in leg one I would be sidelined in the second by some niggling breakdown. By the end of the season in which I managed to finish fourth we'd also run out of spares – incidentally it was written into my contract that if I finished in the top five I was allowed to keep my bike."

Travelling the length and breadth of Europe saw Chris put thousands of miles on his race transport and in his quest for championship honours in '66 he clocked up over 85,000 miles in his Zodiac and trailer. The GPs took him to some very unusual and inhospitable places, none more so than to the barren steppes of the Soviet Union.

"It was the height of the cold war so the Soviets were very uneasy about letting Westerners in and they certainly didn't want us travelling around without an official escort. They'd arranged for us to drive in convoy with 'minders' in their painfully slow old Ladas. The flat landscape just seemed to go on for ever and after a while we couldn't stand the frustration of travelling at 30mph any longer so Rolf Tibblin shouted 'let's go' and we disappeared in a cloud of dust.

"It started to get dark and miles away across the Steppes we could see the twinkling of lights. As we got closer could see it was a huge caravan of gypsies pulled up for the night so we asked if the four of us – Rolf, Jerry and Per Olof Perrson and me – could join them. It was probably the first time they had seen westerners but they were wonderful hosts – they treated us to singing and dancing around the camp fires and after we'd eaten the specially prepared goat's meat we slept under the stars. Needless to say when our minders eventually caught up the following day they were not very pleased!" >>







Fourth in 1966 would prove to be Horsfield's high spot in the world championship standings although his career still had plenty of mileage in it. After an indifferent season on the CZ in '67 Chris was lured away to Thundersley and a works contract with Greeves but things didn't quite work how he'd hoped.

Eric Cheney had seen that the days of the 'big bangers' were numbered and had fitted a Greeves Challenger motor into one of his exquisitely crafted frames. The 250cc version was tested in the December '66 Motor Cycle by staffer Peter Fraser who came away highly impressed by the sure handling two-stroke. His report concluding with the words 'a top flight rider in either 250 or 360 form will have the championship loaded in his favour'. The rider should have been Chris but it didn't work out that way.

"It was potentially a very good machine and featured fully floating brakes and carried the fuel under the seat. This left the 'tank' as merely a shroud for the up and over exhaust system and the HT coil. After commissioning Eric to make it Bert Greeves wouldn't allow me to ride it because he wanted to stick with the aluminium beam frame."

As the history books record little more than a year later Greeves would eventually dispense with H piece frame with their new Griffon so it was a frustrated Horsfield who campaigned the '67 season on a pair of 250/360 works

prepared Challengers. Nevertheless he had some good rides and recorded both British championship and TV trophy wins at Lancashire's Cuerdon Park and Hawkstone. This was all before a heavy crash and resultant broken neck brought both his season and association with Greeves to a premature end.

Not only was Chris a top line rider he'd learnt a lot about machine set up and preparation, skills which were soon being sought by a new kid on the block, Kawasaki. The Japanese firm had a lot to learn about the requirements of a motocross bike.

"Motocross was starting to really take off especially in America and Kawasaki – understandably keen to be part of this potentially huge market – asked me to ride and help develop their bike. It was a rotary valve two-stroke but the power delivery and handling was all wrong – it needed totally redesigning to make it competitive and I started to look around for other rides."

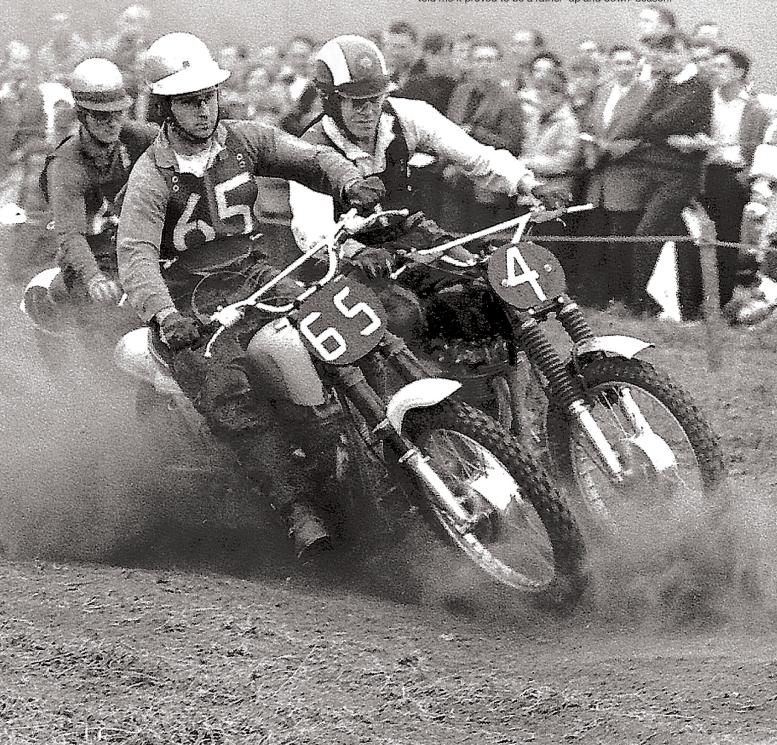
This meant a move to AJS. Following the collapse of AMC the company and its famous names of James, Norton and AJS had been taken over by Manganese Bronze and re-emerged under the umbrella of Norton Villiers. For Chris it was a case of 'full circle' as the machine he was asked to ride and develop was the AJS Stormer – a machine powered by virtually the same engine he had worked on during his days at Wolverhampton



TRAVELLING MAN! "Although the James didn't handle particularly well the engine showed a lot of potential but development was always held back by lack of money. Norton Villiers was keen to have a motocross bike in their range and allocated a budget of £87,000 to develop the Stormer with a team led by Peter Inchley and Fluff Brown."

In Malcolm Davis and Andy Roberton AJS had already recruited two top class riders and it came as little or no surprise when in '68 Davis won the 250cc British championship. A year later a 370 version appeared and in addition to Chris a plethora of top class riders including ex-AMC team mate Vic Eastwood, Roger Harvey, Rob Hooper, Dick Clayton and Arthur Browning all notched up memorable victories on the sure footed two-strokes.

Throughout his long career he was always on the look out for new rides and new challenges and the following season saw a four-stroke mounted Horsfield come to the start gate. The fans loved the sound of the booming 'big bangers' and the Rickmans – who had long campaigned for a big four-stroke class – were quick to sign him when the new 750cc European championship was announced. Chris, who was the first 'official works Rickman rider' lined up on the potent mark four Metisse although as he told me it proved to be a rather 'up and down' season.



"The engine was a full blown 500cc BSA fitted with a Weslake four-valve head – it went like the clappers and after the first couple of rounds I was leading the championship. However it only needed for the Zener diode to smell water and it would stop dead. It was an ongoing problem which eventually scuppered my chances."

Sadly the new championship which started with high hopes ended the year in confusion – one round was inexplicably cancelled and in Switzerland lap scoring and rider identification became impossible when the course turned into a mud bath. It was some time later that the FIM announced that Derek Rickman was the first (and only) European 750cc champion with fellow team member Horsfield runner-up.

Not only did Chris ride the BSA Metisse he also rode a Rickman supplied Bultaco on the near continent although by 1970 he was on his way stateside and as he revealed some lucrative earnings.

"Motocross was taking off in America so Husky importer and enterprising promoter Edison Dye arranged for a group of us including Dave Bickers, John Banks, Robert, De Coster, Mikkola and myself to take on the Yanks. It was a high profile series attracting the best of the American riders including Steve

McQueen and Bud Ekins. It generated some good earnings too – CZ paid me £2,000 before I went and on top of that I also retained all of my prize money. That wad good pay for 1970!"

Riding a CZ supplied by the American importer Chris went back to the States for three more seasons but following a nasty crash he returned home in '72 heavily plastered and considering his future.

"It had been a horrific crash and one I was lucky to escape from without really serious injury so I considered calling it a day. Well I did but decided I was going to race 'one last time' at a meeting near Lyon – a race for which the organisers presented the winner with a gold bar worth about $\mathfrak{L}800$.

"I'd already won it twice and thought it would be good to retire on a high with victory number three. Sadly it was not to be because I crashed again so my career ended up not on the rostrum but in the medics tent."

Rather ironic perhaps that Chris' long and highly successful career which started with a crash through a hedge in Warwickshire should also end in the same way in France.

For 12 eventful years he'd followed his dream of being a professional scrambler and became arguably one of the best riders of his generation.















FOUR DIFFERENT WINNERS, THREE DIFFERENT VENUES AND 12 YEARS OF DEMANDING AND UNPREDICTABLE RACING - DBR TAKES A MISTY EYED LOOK BACK AT THE TOUGH ONE...

2005

Not even a five-minute handicap at the start could stop David Knight from winning the first ever Tough One back in 2005. Before the Manxman picked up his first factory KTM contract he put the hurt to his rivals and dominated the first ever running of the event at Nantmawr Quarry. It took DK a little over one-hour to reach the front before securing the win ahead of brother Juan Knight and Edward Jones.



2006

Now a factory backed racer, Knighter lapped all other Pro class riders in 2006 despite once again being held back at the start. Needing to scramble his way up a steep, stone covered climb in order to get to his bike, DK hit the front after just 30 minutes. That was the last any rider saw of him. Finishing alongside Knight on the podium was Wayne Braybrook and Euan McConnell.

2008

Knighter made it four on the bounce back in 2008, once again placing his KTM on the top step of the podium. The expected battle between Knight and newon-the-scene Polish sensation Taddy Blazusiak didn't materialise with trials bike mounted Michael Brown making life hardest for DK during the first hour of the race. Braybrook lead early on but Knight disappeared once again with Wayne and Taddy joining him on the podium.

2007

Scandinavian enduro gods Kari Tiainen and Anders Eriksson joined in the fun in 2007 – the first year The Tough One opted for a Le Mans style start. But it was again David Knight who dominated the proceeding, securing his hat-trick of wins. A torrential hailstorm 30 minutes into the event spiced things up before the event headed into the dark. DK finished ahead of Wayne Braybrook and Paul Edmondson.









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2012

Back at Nantmawr Quarry Graham Jarvis kept his extreme enduro momentum rolling to claim back-to-back wins ahead of Wayne Braybrook and Ben Hemingway, who secured his first T1 top three result. One of, if not the, hardest Tough one event, Danny McCanney and Paul Bolton were both forced out of the event having holed their clutch covers.

2013The first major extreme enduro event

The first major extreme enduro event of 2013 and it was Graham Jarvis who claimed his hat-trick of Tough One wins. Bringing together riders from Spain, Italy, Germany and South Africa T1 2013 was dominated by the Brits. Jarvis nailed it, Jonny Walker took second with Danny McCanney rounding out the top three.

2014

Possibly the biggest change in the history of The Tough One – Hawkstone Park welcomes the event and the sunshine! What no one really expected was for Knighter to get back to his winning ways but that's what the Manxman did after battling with and passing Jonny Walker. Even a rope in his rear wheel didn't stop DK. With Jonny second, third went to Alfredo Gomez.

2015

Back to Nantmawr Quarry and a first win for Jonny Walker. Leading from start to finish Walker got the job done in style and at the end of lap one was ahead by two-minutes. Jarvis – struggling with arm pump and a slow start – had to settle for the runner-up spot with Alfredo Gomez rounding out the podium.

2016

The last ever Tough One. Sh*tty horrible weather but some great racing. Graham Jarvis claimed his fourth win while David Knight and Paul Bolton round out the podium. After 12 years the curtain finally falls on a truly British event that has attracted an army of overseas riders and delivered some highly memorable racing.



SAY WHAT?

Just some of what the riders said over the years . . .

Cyril Despres – 2005: "It's strange for me competing in an extreme race when I have spent so many months preparing myself for days and days of riding in the desert. But it's been great. I was surprised to find a new concept of racing after so many years competing in many different types of events. I have really enjoyed it. It was like a big, big indoor race. I think this style of race is a great was of bringing enduro to the people.

Jonny Walker - 2015: "The plan was to break Jarvis early on and if I couldn't it was just to follow him, see where he was faster and then try and go again. But luckily I didn't have to do that. My fitness was fine just my hands started hurting towards the end, but it's only because I got blisters. The track was still difficult enough to make a gap. As long as I made that gap early on I could just manage it the same. I could just keep pushing. My mechanic was on the pitboard and I could see that the gap would stay between 1.50 and 2.10 the whole time."

Steve Colley - 2007: "I've never really done anything like this before but I really, really enjoyed it. I went absolutely flat out all race, I had loads of fun. About a mile after the start I got a bit sideways in one of the fields and hit a rock, which broke my rear brake hose. I had no back brake for the whole race. I could have been a lot, lot quicker, and with my problem I was expecting to get beaten. But I just pushed hard for the rest of the race and things went well. It was great."

Edward Jones – 2005: "I pitted for fuel just after the hour. When I got into the pit area the TV crew were filming in there and they'd put their stuff on top of my tool box which meant that I was stopped for longer than I hoped I would be. Mario caught me during the last few laps and managed to pass me when I was stuck in traffic. I kept with him and then he made a mistake which meant that I was able to get third

Graham Jarvis - 2011: "I thought I'd managed to run to my bike pretty quickly but all of the other riders seemed to get onto their bikes and get going faster than I did. I think I was second to last which wasn't what I wanted. I managed to work my way past most of the riders during the first half of the opening lap, but I had really bad arm pump. At the end of the first hour I think I was less than two minutes ahead so I started to put in a few quick laps. The last 30 minutes, and especially the last two laps, were really hard - it was just a case of slogging it out

David Knight – 2014: "I gave it everything I had to win - I had nothing left when the three hours were up. After I got the rope out of my wheel I just pushed as hard as I possibly could. When I realised I was catching Jonny I knew I could win. The track wasn't the most technically demanding but to ride it fast was brutal. The climbs, the bumps and the trails in the woods everything just ground you down over the three hours - it was a real tough course. I loved every minute. To come back and win The Tough One after missing it for the last few years is massive for me. I'm made up with the victory."



STEVE'S SAY!

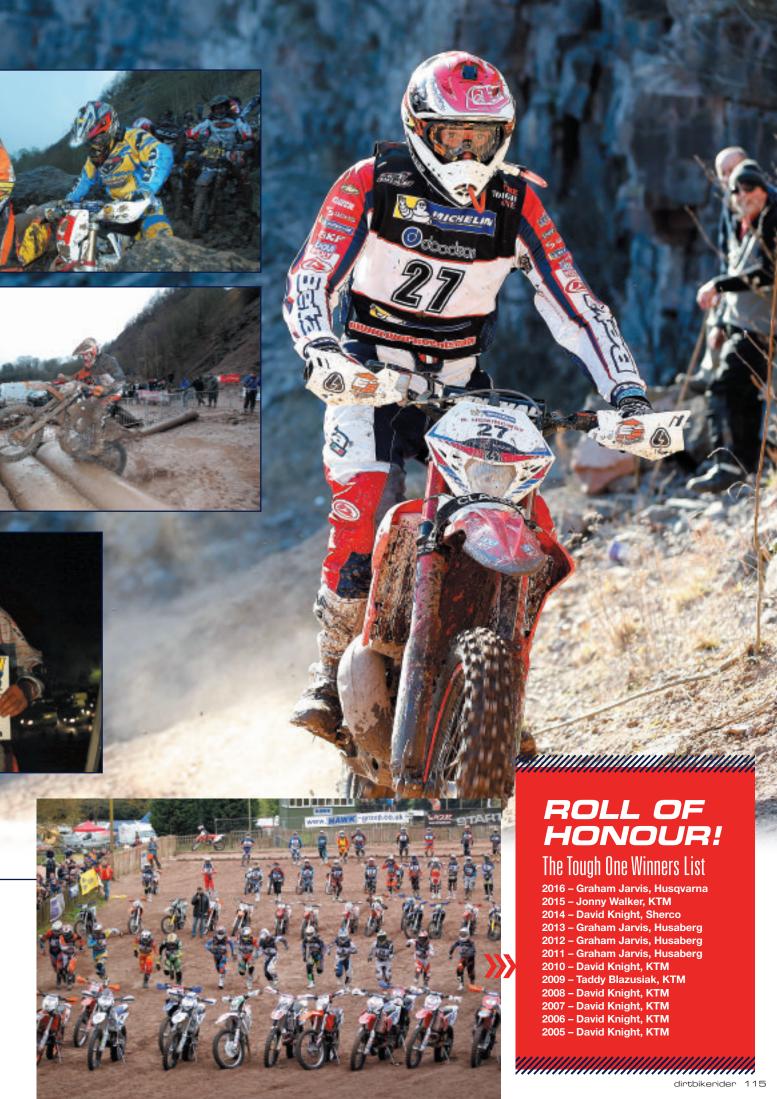
T1 top dog Steve Ireland speaks up . . . _____

"This was the last Tough One at Nantmawr Quarry. It's crazy to think that 12 amazing Tough One events have come and gone. If I think of the riders that have raced here it makes all the hard work that's gone into running the event more than worthwhile.

"We've seen riders such as Mario Rinaldi, Cyril Despres, Anders Eriksson, Kari Tiainen, Ian Hutchinson the road racer, Taddy Blazusiak and more. It's just unbelievable. Then there's the very best of British - David Knight, the enduro legend and six-time event winner, Mr Extreme Graham Jarvis and last year's winner Jonny Walker.

"Personally, I feel this was the best Tough One we've seen. The racing was great and a perfect way to finish off the story of the event. I'm proud of the WOR team and proud of the riders who've competed. I also want to thank the landowner for everything she's done for us. And of course all the sponsors, spectators and riders that made the event what it was.

"The Tough One is finished now but the Tough 100 is the new extreme enduro event WOR are working on. It's going to be 100 miles over open mountains in the middle of June. This year it'll be the start for our next big event...'



LEATT'S ALL-NEW 6.5 GPX CARBON HELMET GETS RIDDEN-IN AND RATED...

Words and photos by Max Hind

TESTED

eatt is a company that was born out of the will to improve protection and heighten the safety of action sports and motorsports athletes. The Leatt neck brace was a revolution. Today you'll rarely see a kid out at your local practice track that isn't wearing some form of neck brace. That's all thanks to Leatt.

It only makes sense for this forward thinking company to finally complete their mission of providing protection to every inch of the human body. Leatt do everything – neck braces, knee braces, elbow pads, full body armour, roost protectors, gloves etc... That list is now complete with the inclusion of the new Leatt GPX helmet.

As always Leatt have tried to be as innovative as possible in the design of this new helmet. Leatt are huge ambassadors of the development of head and brain protection. This is a hot topic at the moment with superstars such as James Stewart being forced out of racing after a few too many knocks to the head.

Concussions have always been a problem in our sport, just look back to the former factory Suzuki rider Broc Hepler who was forced to retire way too young due to a string of concussions. It's a problem that needs to be solved and the GPX is Leatt's first step in attempting to find a solution to the problem.

The first bit of innovative Leatt technology

featured in the GPX is the '360 Turbines'. These turbine shaped disks are made from a substance called Armourgel. Leatt is currently the only helmet manufacturer employing

be shaped and moulded into these turbine forms. However upon impact the gel become hard, meaning that the Armourgel turbines have great energy absorption properties. These 360 Turbines are placed around the helmet between the inner lining and outer shell - as close to the head and brain as possible.

The unique turbine design creates a collapsible structure that further aids impact absorption. This reportedly reduces head impacts by up to 30 per cent at levels that would normally cause concussions. The unique shape of these turbines also allows a slight movement for the head within the helmet. This is done to reduce the rotational acceleration to the head and brain by up to 40 per cent upon impact. This turbine technology all comes together to greatly reduce the risk of concussions.

The GPX's outer shell is moulded using multi density 'V-Foam' that is designed once again to absorb energy and reduce the risks of concussion.

One thing you will immediately notice when looking at or picking up the Leatt GPX is how freaking small it is – even the extra large adult sized one! This is due to one of Leatt's core ideologies of helmet design. They believe that a reduced outer shell volume reduces rotational brain acceleration and neck forces. This basically means that a smaller helmet has a smaller chance of rotating or twisting your neck and brain in weird ways which makes sense when you think about it.

As well as the big concussion prevention features the GPX also boasts several other cool and smart ideas. For example the helmet is







WITH TWO MONTHS OF RIDING UNDER HIS BELT DEXTER DOUGLAS, THE 16-YEAR-OLD SUBJECT OF OUR 2016 PROJECT, IS FIGHTING FIT AND WITH HIS RMJ ACADEMY FC250 HUSQVARNA DIALLED IN HE'S LOOKING FORWARD TO FINALLY GETTING HIS SEASON UNDER WAY...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Immy Jones

hen we last caught up with Dexter Douglas he was turning a few tentative laps in Spain on the 2016 RMJ Academy/Husqvarna UK FC250 as he continued his convalescence from a broken wrist

The New Year was the first time the 16-year-old prospect had been on a bike since his crash in Germany and the aim was for him to return to the UK at the end of January and be in a position to push for a full moto.

A full month after he arrived back in the UK we find him in good spirits with his first race of the season – the opening round of the Michelin MX Nationals at Preston Docks – on March 5-6 just days away.

"Things are going well," he says. "I'm riding three or four times a week, pretty much at FatCat and Preston Docks. I've also just been out in Holland for a couple of days doing suspension testing with WP and it was really productive. I struggled a bit at first to get a good set-up but the technician from WP was very helpful and now I'm feeling good and ready for the races."

The purpose of our project is to follow Dexter's progress from schoolboy champion to full-time Pro and part of that process is getting to grips with the intricacies of machine set-up and his Dutch trip was an eye-opener for the Blackburn-based teenager.

"I've never really set up suspension before so it's a bit of a steep learning curve for me. The guy from WP reckons the settings will work on hard-pack as well as sand with just a few little adjustments so it was worth my while going over."

It was certainly time well spent and the result is a bike that suits his style and fills him with confidence going into the 2016 season.

"It's better over bumps now and once we'd got the suspension dialled in I found I could lean over much more in corners without the bike wanting to stand up which has made a big difference. It already turned better compared to my '15 bike before we went to Holland and now I feel it's an even better package to go racing on."

It's been a busy time for Dexter and he's been working hard to get his new bike set up while working on his all-round physical conditioning with coach Richard-Mike Jones and the PhD team at Liverpool John Moores University.

"My wrist is feeling strong now and is pretty much perfect. I'm still strapping it up when I'm riding just to give it some protection and be on the safe side. The team at Liverpool John Moores University have been a massive help. I've been having physio to build up the strength and movement and Harris and Ross have helped a lot too."

As well as strengthening his wrist he's also working on adding a few pounds to his slender frame to help with his strength conditioning. This will allow him to muscle his way around tracks in the UK and Europe as he chases his season's goals of winning the MXY2 title in the MX Nationals and the Maxxis championships and the Open class in the BYN. He's also aiming to qualify for the hotly-contested EMX250 series.

"Steven [Smith] from LJMU has been giving me advice on my diet as well. I have to put on weight which means more calories than I burn because I'd burn 1800 calories if I just did nothing all day. It's pretty hard to do."

DBR will be following Dexter and the RMJ Academy Husqvarna every month so stay tuned for further updates...





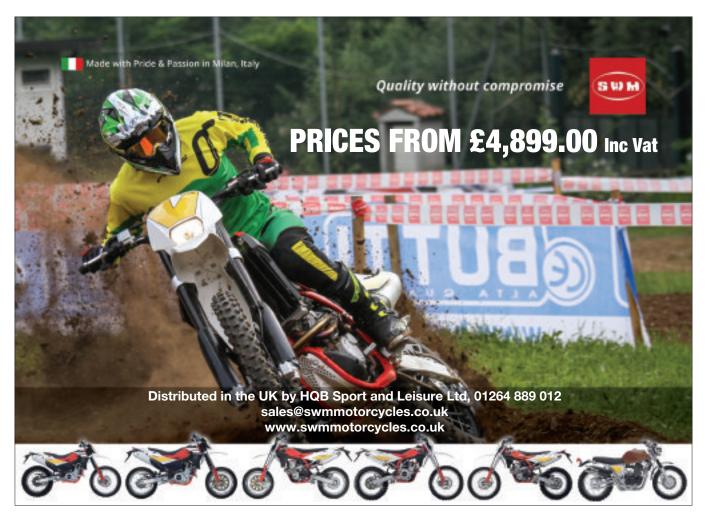


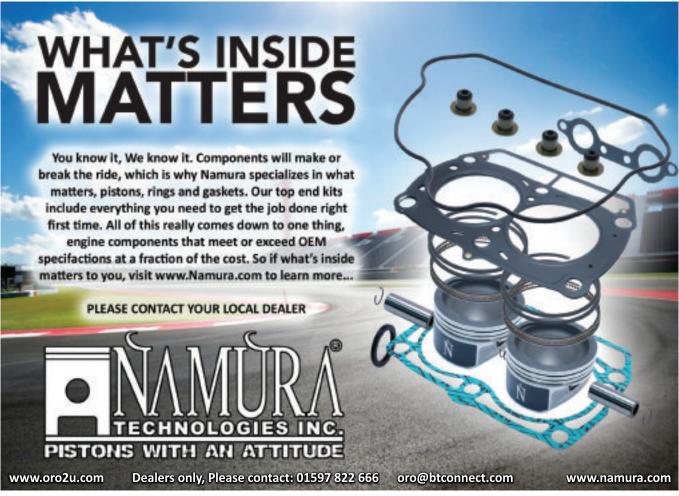
the MXGP series with the passionate Pisa-based squad...

Words by Dickie Dye Photos by Haggis Hartman

120 dirtbikerider











n August 2015, as the embers faded on a difficult and turbulent season, it was not my intention - or desire - to be sitting in a race truck in Italy a few months later looking forward to racing in 2016.

Not only would I be working with an established Italian GP motocross team again but I'd also be putting together plans for a season of grand prix racing which started on the other side of the world. The twists and turns of motocross continue to lead me astray...

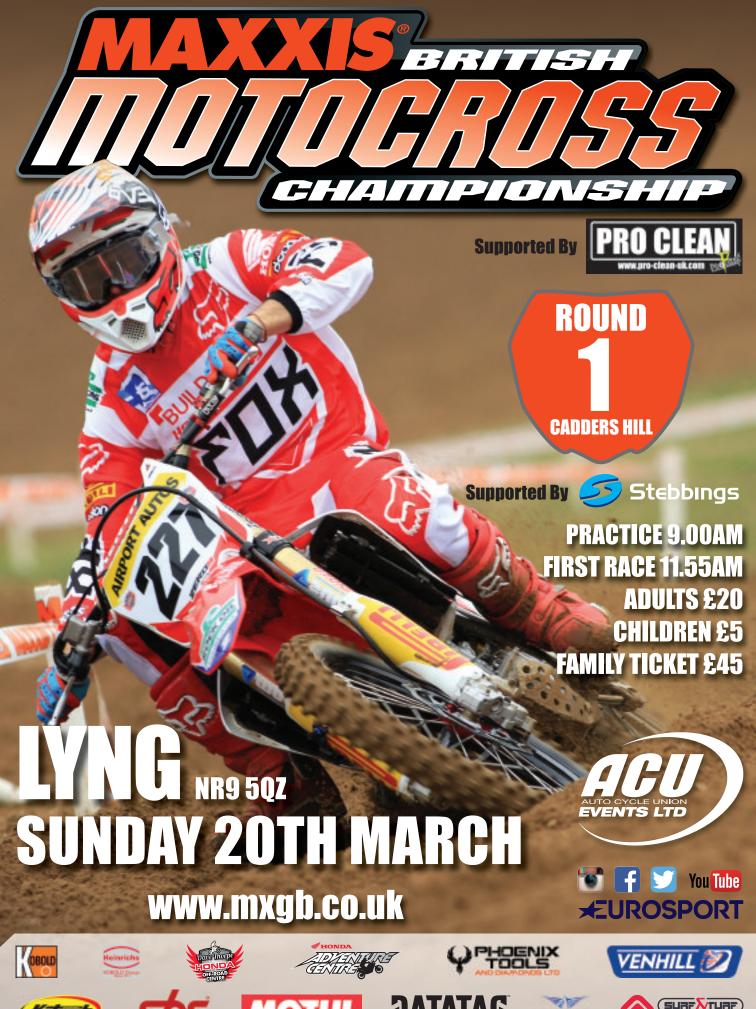
The JK Racing motocross team is an established GP outfit created by Italian motocross enthusiast Riccardo Boschi, although the original JK Racing Team was a national jetski racing outfit for whom Riccardo competed. When the jetski team folded, Riccardo kept the name and some of the sponsors and turned his hand from regional motocross and jetski racing, diving straight in at the deep end of GP MX.

In 2000, with young French racer Luigi Seguy and European motocross champion Nenad Sipek, the team were Yamaha-mounted - an association that has lasted until now (apart from 2009 to 2011 when the team became JK Aprilia when Riccardo was drafted in to run the factory team with Josh Coppins and Alfie Smith).

Graeme Irwin and current world championship contender Shaun Simpson have both ridden for JK Yamaha in the past, together with riders including Eric Sorby, Nikolay Kumanov and Nico Aubin who was a GP virgin until his association with the JK team. Another high point for Riccardo was when his JK Racing team was part of the victorious French Motocross des Nations trio at Namur in 2001 with Luigi Seguy, David Vuillemin and Yves Demaria.

Riccardo's phone is glued to his head and all questions are answered with "si, si" before the matter is dealt with. His full-time right-hand man is the diminutive Renato Ferro who runs the workshop just outside Pisa with a typical laidback Italian efficiency.

Fuelled by nicotine and caffeine, Renato drives the huge HGV race truck and travels the globe. He puts up and pulls down the massive GP awning, builds race bikes, orders parts and generally works hands-on to ensure the whole package is delivered on time.

























The workshop, as you would expect, is spotless, clinical and full of bikes past and present. Three of the remaining four factory Aprilias in existence stand in line with the other machines which have passed through this working mausoleum. The walls are adorned with the trophies of past success and huge images of racers who have passed through the JK doors, some on their way to becoming our sport's superstars. Most are supported, arms raised, by a smiling Riccardo. There is a gym, shower and parts store in this amazing in-house set-up.

I've worked for the past two seasons with Alex Snow and renewed my association with Alfie last year who was recalled to the JK racing squad as its lone MX2 GP rider. Soon after Alex also signed up to compete in his first full year of MXGP and for Alfie, who's still only 22, this will be his third season, the first two years also being with JK on its factory Aprilias.

The team was to be based in and co-ordinated from Italy by Riccardo and we all worked closely with sponsors and tuners in England and suppliers from all over the world. So the seeds were sewn and preparations began.

Both Alex and Alfie were recovering from injury when contracts were signed so the first job was to design a training programme that worked on fitness and strength and also incorporated physio and injury recuperation, specifically targeting GP races and weekend long events.

The physical conditioning is always hard. It's an aspect of motocross which I love and there are no short cuts for nearly three of our cold winter months. Both boys could not have done more but the stresses and strains of

a regimented routine were broken by several visits to Italy for training and further preparation.

A new team, new Yamaha machinery and a new country – that's a lot to absorb and deal with...

Existing suspension technician Gavin Lowes from G-Force and experienced engineer and motor technician Matt Norris from MNE worked tirelessly and soon bikes were built, racers were fit to ride and testing began in the UK and Italy. Gradually the team took shape with confidence growing every week and speed gathered as the GP goal drew nearer.

For the riders the challenges ahead are great and slowly they rise to the occasion – and who wouldn't?

Of course, there are doubters – I expect that. It must be built into the equation, human nature being what it is, although after over 30 years in motocross I can detach from that and remain positive and focussed.

What gives me a renewed enthusiasm for this sport and what claws me away from my wife and boys at home in Devon is not money! It is the passion and motivation of all those involved in this team. I love the commitment, the hours of effort, the thousands of miles of travel. The sweat, the blood, the goals which can only be achieved in a well-oiled team.

The focus is firmly on the riders. There is no ulterior motive. Two young racers with a gift to race motocross who have been given a chance to compete on the biggest motocross stage in the world. They are giving it all they have.

Both Riccardo and Renato at the JK Racing heart bleed motocross and so do Alex and Alfie. What 100 per cent will deliver remains to be seen...



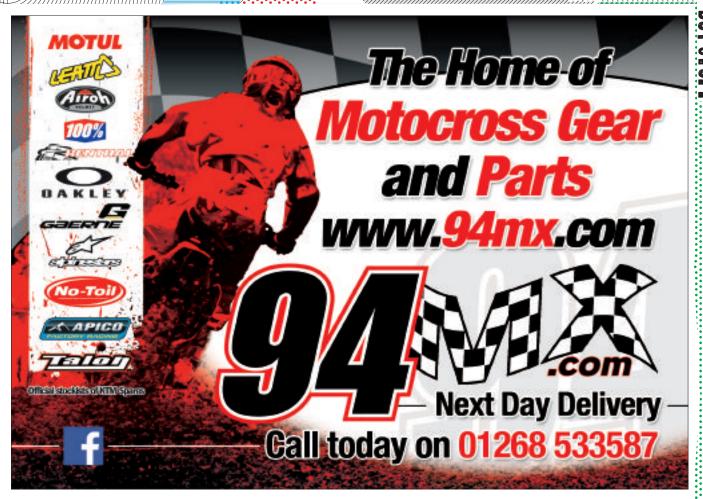
Manuel Lacopi is the squad's only Italian rider



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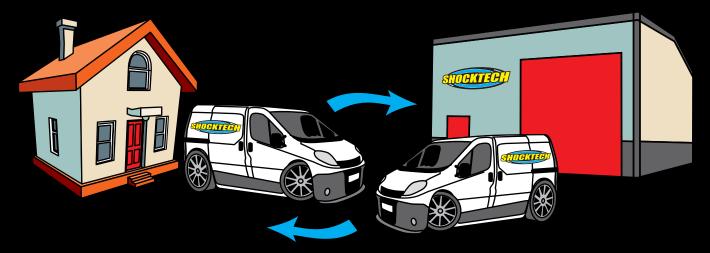
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2900 ALL SHINE INDOORS

utting his own personal seal of satisfaction on this year's Monster Energy AX series, Harry Kimber wrapped up the Supermini title at the penultimate round in Sheffield Arena – and that makes Harry a double champion as he won it last year too.

There was harsh luck for Preston Williams though. After a rousing runner-up finish – which included the fastest lap in the qualifier race – he then unluckily dropped out with injury in the evening finale.

Joe Clayton took another brace of wins in the Pro Lites and with confidence high about ultimate championship victory he also pitched into the main Pro races. A fifth place return in the LCQ was his impressive calling card – no way did he embarrass himself on a 250 up against the bigger guns.

In the 65s – the closest of the title tussles – Bailey Johnson starred in Sheffield, taking the overall with a 3-1 result. Jack Taylor with yet another top show (4-2) was second on the podium. Tye Jones won the qualifier race and came home third overall with a seventh in the Main Event.

As for the high-flying series leaders Kiean Boughen and Ollie Colmer, they both had their

worst rounds to date. Did the pressure get to them? They scored 18 and 23 points respectively but with both boys able to drop their poorest scores they headed off to Wembley with it all still absolutely in the balance.

At the Wembley finale, Colmer headed Boughen all through qualification but Boughen bossed it when it really mattered, taking the points win ahead of Colmer in the qualification race. Effectively that took the pressure off to a degree as with his worst score dropped it meant Boughen had an eight-point advantage going into the evening's Main Event. Laying down the fastest lap, Colmer would win the series closer but comfortable in second place – albeit with a last corner error - the title went to an overjoyed Boughen.

Scoring a brace of thirds, Arai Elcock completed the Wembley podium as Jak Taylor – going 4-5 – did enough to secure championship third.

In the Superminis champion Kimber made it series wins number 19 and 20 to end his 85cc days with a real flourish. Team Green runners Kacey Hird and Lewis Hall matched each other blow for blow with a second and a third apiece but the championship runner-up award went to Hird with

Hall settling on series third.

On his 16th birthday Dylan Woodcock choose Wembley for his Kawasaki 250cc debut ride and ran 3-4 in the Pro Lites which was good enough for third on the podium. Jodan Moxey went 4-2 taking second overall as series supremo Joe Clayton blitzed it yet again with his ninth series 1-1. For good measure Clayton had another outing with the Pros, this time finishing sixth in the LCQ.

George Clarke – runner-up in Lites moto one – ended the night with a deserved championship runner-up plate as Edward Briscoe (5-3) held onto series third, just ahead of Moxey.

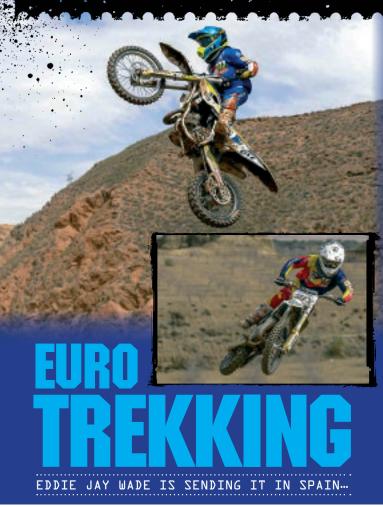
FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

65cc: 1 Kiean Boughen 357, **2** Ollie Colmer 351, **3** Jak Taylor 295, **4** Tye Jones 279, **5** Arai Elcock 251

Supermini: 1 Harry Kimber 390, 2 Kacey Hird 333, 3 Lewis Hall 329, 4 Ben Clayton 291, 5 Preston Williams 289

Pro Lites: 1 Joe Clayton 391, 2 George Clarke 347, 3 Edward Briscoe 315, 4 Jordan Moxey 312, 5 Josh Greedy 255

ARE YOU DO ENOUGH?



assive amounts of travel, not to the mention the overall expense involved and then avoiding the inevitable pitfalls of date clashes – those are the tricky part of seeking out success in Europe in 2016. One of our brightest hopes, BW85cc pilot Eddie Jay Wade is just one of many going down this route and his season got off to an absolutely blinding start at the opening round of the Spanish National series.

Following a two-month break at the end of last season and then a winter training camp with RMJ, this was big-wheel rookie Ed's first competitive outing of the year.

Aged just 13 and with a massive amount of planning going into it, 2016 is the start of the really serious stuff for EJW. It's also fair to say picking a path through all the various date clashes influenced a big part of his racing programme this year.

Spanish resident Ed lines up in his home series and he's hoping to qualify for the European finals but he does have to miss the opening Euro qualifier as it clashes with the BYN series. The Euro final is in Loket in July this year and then there's the world finals in Russia in August.

The Spanish championships run over just four rounds, features adults and youths and with two motos per round there's little room for error. The

first round took place on February 20-21 at Sanlucar de Barrameda. There was 46 registered 85cc/150cc riders and in his first ever big-wheel race this was a new track for Ed.

Saturday morning was given over to qualification and Ed topped free practice while learning the track, going on to finish second fastest in the timed period.

Choosing an inside gate pick for the first Saturday afternoon moto was clearly favourite and despite not getting the holeshot Ed had taken the lead by turn two. Stretching it out to 25 seconds and with a host of more experienced riders behind, Ed looked comfortable, It wasn't all plain sailing though as a tumble while passing a back-market meant the closing laps got a little more interesting. Still, Ed crossed the line to win six seconds clear.

With a record 7,000-plus crowd gathered for the main adult Sunday events, the whole place came to life with the big gig feeling.

Grabbing the holeshot in moto two, Ed had company on his tail for the first four laps. The pace was hot but with Ed getting into a rhythm he soon pulled clear to win by 22 seconds.

The next round goes off at Talavera on March 19-20.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

BOUGHEN#5

HOMETOWN: KINGS LYNN DOB: 27/10/05
SPONSORS: HARDCORE RACING|SHMX SUSPENSION|MASTER KIDS UK

The big question is how to make a name for yourself in the winter MX off-season? One answer surely is go rip it up in Monster Energy Arenacross.

From this year's talented crop it's easy to say no-one has done that job better than 10-year-old East Anglian Kiean Boughen.

Claiming the most moto wins in an 11-round bar-to-bar tussle with Ollie Colmer, the outcome went right down to the wire. Securing the title with a London 1-2, Boughen completed his amazing transformation from relative unknown to national champion.

With dad Bradley organising some of the biggest events in 2016 – and hopefully beyond – the surname Boughen seems set for a distinguished MX run.

Coming up next for the family Boughen, it's Master Kids UK at Mildenhall (April 30-May 2) and with around 400 booked in it's going to be epic. Later this year (August 4-6) Master Kids SX hits the Norfolk Arena at Kings Lynn and this could lead to a full-blown series in 2017.

"This year with have gone up to 400 riders and we still have a reserve list as long as your arm," says Brad. "You can do so much more for a one-off event than you can a multi-round series. We give lots of prizes away and all the riders get a big trophy.

"We have fun fairs, live bands and lots of other

stuff going on. It's more of a big get together festival than a national meeting. A fun, friendly, family weekend suitable for riders of all ability – relative beginners to the very best we have in the UK.

"Looking ahead I've been in talks with various people about a major 2017 SX series, more on that as this year goes on."

Following champagne celebrations at Wembley, Rage caught up with Kiean and Brad.

Rage: First off Kiean, high fives for winning AX, you were absolutely brilliant. Before your amazing run of success what was your biggest win or best outdoor show? And did you have any previous indoor experience?

KB: "I've only ever completed two championships outdoors, both in the Autos. I finished second in the summer series and then won the winter series for PJMC in 2014. Last year I did some of the BYN 65cc rounds. I did okay – my dad only put me in for some experience, getting ready for this season.

"I didn't have any indoor experience before this year, none at all. I watched a lot of YouTube videos of previous years' AX and I just knew I could do well at it."

Rage: How will you look back on the AX series?

KB: "I entered every round to win and that's been my attitude right from the start. Sheffield was a real disaster, with eight crashes in total I had no luck at



all there. I had three other crashes in three different races at other venues – that lost me a lot of points – and it was tough getting them back.

"I was 14 points down going into Birmingham but after winning all four races I came away 12 points clear. Going into Wembley with my worst round dropped I was still six points in the lead. Wembley was just amazing, the best feeling ever when I won it.

"I want to say a massive thank you to Hardcore Racing, SHMX Suspension, RMJ training, Wheeldon Off-Road Centre, Joe Clayton and of course to mum and dad."

Rage: Other than Master Kids (Mildenhall) and Master Kids SX, which other national events have you entered this year and have you set yourself any goals?

KB: "My dad has booked me in for the ACU British Youth Nationals, that's going to be mega tough I know but I am hoping for podium finishes. We are also doing the MCF LS Promotions Premier Cup, I'm going there looking to win that one."

Rage: Thanks for all that Kiean, congratulations once again and all the best for the outdoor season.





GREEN FOR GO!

IT'S BEEN A SUCCESSFUL FEW YEARS FOR TEAM GREEN SINCE IT WAS REINTRODUCED BACK IN 2013 AND IF LOOKS ARE ANYTHING TO GO BY AFTER THE RECENT TEAM LAUNCH 2016 LOOKS SET TO BE THEIR BEST YET.

with its heritage Team Green is a bit of an institution in British motocross – in fact, it stretches beyond our shores too with an incredibly successful programme in America too. In Britain back in the 1980s it was Kawasaki UK 'Uncle' Alec Wright who set the ball rolling when he set up Team Green with the idea of nurturing British talent and set them on their way to becoming fully-fledged professionals.

That ethos hasn't changed to this day and when you consider some of the racers that have come through the Team Green programme both here and further afield it speaks volumes for the success it's had.

Dave Thorpe, Paul Malin, Carl Nunn, Tommy Searle and Max Anstie to name just a few have all ridden for Team Green and stateside US legends like Jeff Emig, Jeremy McGrath, James Stewart and the GOAT himself Ricky Carmichael have all come up through the ranks. No pressure then lads!

Joking aside, there isn't any pressure from within the team for the lads to go out and win – mostly because all of the riders on the team are so self-motivated to do that anyway. It's part of the reason why they are on the team.

The team is currently working on the principle of a four-rider programme but that's not to say that it can't expand.

"After initial discussions with Ross Burridge [Kawasaki UK's Senior Racing and Marketing Coordinator] on re-establishing the team we just felt that four was our magic number," explains Team Manager Jeff Perrett. "It's a good number of riders to have on the track without over-stretching our resources but, of course, there's scope to expand the numbers if we feel the right rider comes along.

"We have four talented riders that all get on and we gel well. We get stronger year after year with continuity and planning and become a more professional team with it."

To explain how Team Green youth's programme works, three of the four riders remain on the team for a third year as Kawasaki and the team's impressive list of sponsorship partners continue to work hard to bring their riders through the system.

This year is another step forward for the team as it's the first time since 2013 that they'll have riders on KX250Fs. Dylan Woodcock and Jed Etchells will both be moving up to the MXY2 class and racing the Maxxis British championships as well as the MX Nationals.

Woodcock will also be travelling back and forth to America in an attempt to qualify for Loretta Lynn's and taking in the occasional arenacross which incorporates the Ricky Carmichael Road to Supercross programme. He'll also race some EMX250 rounds, starting with the British GP.

It's also the first time the team will compete in the European 85cc championship as Lewis Hall





Facebook @Kawasaki Team Green and

on Twitter @UKTeamGreen.

tail end of 2015 but he's now back riding and

looking good. He may be behind on bike fitness













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